

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Tyrone Davis

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Davis, Tyrone
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Tyrone Davis,
<b>Dates:</b>	June 15, 2000
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2000
<b>Physical Description:</b>	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:38:24).
<b>Abstract:</b>	R & B singer Tyrone Davis (1938 - 2005 ) was a musician based out of Chicago. His initial success came with the song "Can I Change My Mind?" in 1968 and Davis continued to top the charts for the next few decades. A Billboard survey taken in the late 1980s placed Tyrone Davis as number 30 on the All-Time Top R&B Charts. Davis passed away on February 9, 2005. Davis was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 15, 2000, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2000_018
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Born in Greenville, Mississippi, on May 4, 1938, Tyrone Davis left his hometown at age fourteen. Eager to leave the Jim Crow South, he enlisted the help of his father, who sent him a bus ticket to Michigan. By age nineteen, Davis had settled in Chicago, where he became immersed in the city's flourishing blues scene. He was inspired by the music of blues greats Bobby "Blue" Bland and Little Milton. He visited blues clubs regularly and eventually befriended R&B legends Freddie King, Otis Rush and Mighty Joe Young. These musicians spotted Davis' talent and persuaded him to audition at local clubs. Throughout the 1950s, he performed in the small clubs that dotted the South Side of Chicago.

In the late 1960s, Davis began recording original blues tracks for the Four Brothers label. These early recordings received little notice until a disc jockey at a Texas radio station played the B-side of one of his singles on the air. "Can I Change My Mind?" catapulted Davis into the ranks of the Billboard charts, where it crossed over from the R&B charts to the pop charts. The song eventually sold more than 1 million copies and thrust Davis firmly into the limelight.

Since that first success, Davis has enjoyed a long and successful career as a musician. His phenomenal body of recordings includes more than fifty hit songs. These include "Turn Back the Hands of Time," "Turning Point" and the 1970s disco hit "Give It Up (Turn It Loose)." In 1976, Davis left Dakar Records, where he had recorded since "Can I Change My Mind?" and joined industry behemoth Columbia Records. While with Columbia, Davis made some of his most inspired recordings, which include ballads such as "In the Mood," "Close to You" and "Heart Failure." Some of his major albums have been Without You In My Life and It's All In The Game.

Davis has performed for thirty years and remains a vital force on the recording and touring circuit. His backup

group, the Platinum Band, is among Chicago's most respected ensembles. Together they scored yet another hit in 1991 with the song "Mom's Apple Pie."

A Billboard survey taken in the late 1980s placed Davis thirtieth on the All-Time Top R&B Charts. In 1998, Tyrone Davis was awarded the R&B Foundation's prestigious Pioneer Award for his lifetime of work.

Davis was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on June 15, 2000.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Tyrone Davis was conducted by Herb Kent on June 15, 2000, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. R & B singer Tyrone Davis (1938 - 2005 ) was a musician based out of Chicago. His initial success came with the song "Can I Change My Mind?" in 1968 and Davis continued to top the charts for the next few decades. A Billboard survey taken in the late 1980s placed Tyrone Davis as number 30 on the All-Time Top R&B Charts. Davis passed away on February 9, 2005.

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## Restrictions

### Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

### Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

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## Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

Davis, Tyrone

Kent, Herb (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Davis, Tyrone--Interviews

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African American singers--Interviews.

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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## Occupations:

R & B Singer

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

MusicMakers

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## Administrative Information

### Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

### Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Tyrone Davis, June 15, 2000. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

### Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

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## Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

## Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Tyrone Davis, Section A2000\_018\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:07 ?

Soul singer Tyrone Davis discusses his experiences working as valet for bluesman Freddie King. Davis recalls his early adolescence in rural Mississippi and his decision at age fourteen to leave home, where he saw no future for himself beyond a life of chopping cotton. He tells how he left without his mother's knowledge and joined his father in Saginaw, Michigan, where he worked odd jobs and saved money. Davis discusses his urban transformation and his trip back to Mississippi to visit his family, showing off his new car and hip urban clothing. He goes on to tell about his move in 1957 to Chicago, Illinois, where he sang at various local blues clubs and worked 'day jobs' at a steel mill and later for Willie Barney of Barney's Record Shop and Four Brothers Records. Davis fondly remembers his mentor, pianist Harold Burrage, who discovered him singing in a club and produced his first recordings, foreseeing great things for his young protege. Finally, Davis remembers Burrage's sudden death in 1966.

King, Freddy, 1934-1976.

Rural-urban migration--United States.

Blues (Music)--Illinois--Chicago.

Record labels.

Sound recording industry.

Burrage, Harold.

Video Oral History Interview with Tyrone Davis, Section A2000\_018\_001\_002, TRT: 0:31:12 ?

Soul singer Tyrone Davis discusses how he was affected by the death of his mentor, Harold Burrage. He talks about working with Monk Higgins and meeting his manager, Wally Roker. Davis also talks about recording the hit single, 'Baby, Can I Change My Mind?' in 1968. Davis discusses his work with Brunswick Records, the recording of 'A Woman Needs to Be Loved' and the release and great success of the single, 'Baby, Can I Change My Mind' . Finally, Tyrone Davis reveals his realization that he'd been recording successful songs without having a recording contract.

Burrage, Harold.

Higgins, Monk.

Sound recording industry.

Popular music.

Brunswick Records.

Video Oral History Interview with Tyrone Davis, Section A2000\_018\_001\_003, TRT: 0:30:10 ?

Soul singer Tyrone Davis discusses his first recording contract and his first musical tour. Davis also discusses the recording of 'You Can't Keep a Good Man Down' and the hit song, 'Turn Back the Hands of Time.' Additionally, Davis talks about his favorite song that he's recorded. Finally, Tyrone Davis discusses the unfairness of the music industry and radio stations, his intention to self-publish, and his admiration of Luther Vandross.

Sound recording industry.

Popular music.

Radio broadcasting.

Vandross, Luther.

Music trade.

Video Oral History Interview with Tyrone Davis, Section A2000\_018\_001\_004, TRT: 0:07:55 ?

Soul singer Tyrone Davis discusses his commitment to loyalty in the music industry, his legacy, and how far he's come in his life.

Sound recording industry.

Music trade.