

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with James Kaiser

Overview of the Collection

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| Repository: | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com |
| Creator: | Kaiser, James, 1943- |
| Title: | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with James Kaiser, |
| Dates: | August 15, 2000 |
| Bulk Dates: | 2000 |
| Physical Description: | 6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:57:30). |
| Abstract: | Corporate chief executive James Kaiser (1943 -) became President of one of Corning Glass' divisions, Enseco, Inc., in 1992 at age 49. Kaiser currently serves on the board of directors of several major corporations, including Sunoco, and owns a Lexus dealership in Memphis, Tennessee. Kaiser was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 15, 2000, in Highland Ranch, Colorado. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| Identification: | A2000_025 |
| Language: | The interview and records are in English. |

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, James Kaiser, after the death of his father, moved to California with his mother and brother. This change of circumstances caused some lean financial years for the Kaiser family. During that time, his mother worked to help desegregate the Catholic schools in California . She counted Roy Wilkins, executive secretary of the NAACP, as one of the family friends.

After high school, where he lettered in football, Kaiser attended and graduated from UCLA in 1966 with a degree in political science. After graduation he entered the Navy and served two tours in Vietnam, earning the Navy achievement medal. After being discharged, Jim Kaiser married Kathryn Mounday and began a career in business. Corporate America made fertile ground for this bright and aggressive African American. Joining Corning Glass Works as a sales representative, he rose through the ranks. In 1986, Jim became a Senior VP at Corning with management responsibilities in the US, Asia and Latin America. He then became President of one of Corning Glass' divisions, Enseco, Inc., in 1992 at age 49. Kaiser currently serves on the board of directors of several major corporations, including Sunoco, and owns a Lexus dealership in Memphis, Tennessee. He splits his time between Denver and Memphis.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with James Kaiser was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on August 15, 2000, in Highland Ranch, Colorado, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Corporate chief executive James Kaiser (1943 -) became President of one of Corning Glass' divisions, Enseco, Inc., in 1992 at age 49. Kaiser currently serves on the board of directors of several major corporations, including Sunoco, and owns a Lexus dealership in Memphis, Tennessee.

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®.

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.

Controlled Access Terms

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

Persons:

Kaiser, James, 1943-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Kaiser, James, 1943---Interviews

African American businesspeople--United States.

Minority executives--United States

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Corporate Chief Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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 James Kaiser, August 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).

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.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with James Kaiser, Section A2000_025_001_001, TRT: 0:30:01 ?

Corporate CEO James G. Kaiser begins by recalling his family background, focusing on his parents' relatively light complexion, which caused him to ponder his racial identity and heritage early in his life. Kaiser shares childhood memories from growing up in the largely white community of Clayton, Missouri, and describes his parents' involvement in civil rights activities. He explains how his family became close with NAACP leader Roy Wilkins and recalls the values his family taught him.

Childhood--Missouri--Clayton.

African American families--Missouri--Clayton.

Wilkins, Roy, 1901-1981.

African Americans--Race identity.

Civil rights workers.

Video Oral History Interview with James Kaiser, Section A2000_025_001_002, TRT: 0:27:28 ?

Corporate CEO James G. Kaiser continues to discuss his ethnic heritage, talking about his family's Native American ancestors. Kaiser then recalls his high school family life, including his parents' separation, their move to Los Angeles, and his brother's stint in the military. He remembers his high school activities and academic achievements and explains his decision to attend the University of California at Los Angeles.

University of California, Los Angeles--African American students.

African American families.

Divorce--United States.

African Americans--Education.

Video Oral History Interview with James Kaiser, Section A2000_025_001_003, TRT: 0:30:04 ?

Corporate CEO James G. Kaiser details his experiences at the University of California at Los Angeles, discussing his studies in political science and business and his participation in the Naval ROTC. Kaiser explains his decision to join the Navy after graduating from UCLA. He details his two-year tour of duty in Vietnam, and explains why he chose to forgo a career in the military. He then recalls his early career with Corning, Inc., where he worked in sales, advertising, and marketing.

University of California, Los Angeles.

United States. Navy--African Americans.

Vietnam War, 1961-1975--African Americans.

Corning Incorporated.

Video Oral History Interview with James Kaiser, Section A2000_025_001_004, TRT: 0:30:57 ?

Corporate CEO James G. Kaiser continues to discuss his career with Corning, Inc. Kaiser explains how his continuing interest in education led Corning to offer him a fellowship at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Sloan School of Management. After earning his MBA, Kaiser explains how he moved up the ladder at Corning before being passed over for a promotion because of race. Following this incident, Kaiser tells of how Corning instead offered him a position at a subsidiary corporation, Enesco, Inc. Kaiser explains why he took the job and moved to Denver, Colorado, where he became instrumental in Enesco's success.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Sloan School of Management.

Racism in the workplace.

Relocation--Colorado--Denver.

Enesco Corporation.

Corning Incorporated.

Video Oral History Interview with James Kaiser, Section A2000_025_001_005, TRT: 0:30:55 ?

Corporate CEO James G. Kaiser explains why he retired from Corning and bought his own car dealership. He shares his advice for young people and African Americans in the corporate world stressing the need to diversify corporate boards. Kaiser then discusses his ideas for giving back to the African

American community. After telling of his wife and daughter's careers, Kaiser discusses his involvement with various corporate boards and explains corporate structure.

Retirement--African Americans.

Diversity in the workplace--United States.

African American women--Employment.

Mentoring in business.

Corporations--United States.

Video Oral History Interview with James Kaiser, Section A2000_025_001_006, TRT: 0:28:05 ?

Corporate CEO James G. Kaiser comments on the risks inherent in being an African American pioneer. He reflects on his contributions to diversity at Corning and his legacy. He also discusses how the African American community can come together, and offers his hope that African Americans can be self-reliant.

African American leadership--United States.

Diversity in the workplace--United States.

Community development.

Corning Incorporated.