

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Howard Brookins, Sr.

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Brookins, Howard, Sr., 1932-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Howard Brookins, Sr.,
Dates:	July 7, 2000
Bulk Dates:	2000
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:18:33).
Abstract:	State senator The Honorable Howard Brookins, Sr. (1932 -) is the owner of Brookins Funeral Home, and has served in both the Illinois House of Representatives and the Illinois State Senate. Brookins was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 7, 2000, in Springfield, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2000_044
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Howard Beamon Brookins was born on June 6, 1932 in Chicago, Illinois. The son of Howard and Leona Brookins, he attended DuSable High School and Wilson Junior College (now Kennedy-King) before being drafted into the United States Army. Serving during the Korean War, Brookins had an opportunity to become an officer, but changed his mind when the fighting ceased. Brookins returned to Chicago to resume his education, attending Chicago State University and Cortez Peters Business College. He supported himself by working at the U.S. Post Office. In 1958, one of Brookins' co-workers suggested that he take the Chicago Police Exam. He passed and joined the Chicago Police Department. The same year, he also married Audrey Mason, his wife for over forty years.

Brookins remained on the police force for twelve years. During this time, the Reverend Louis Rawls offered him a job as a funeral driver. Rawls later suggested that Brookins start his own business as a mortician. Brookins enrolled at the Worsham College of Mortuary Science while still on the police force. In 1970, Brookins bought a funeral home on the South Side of Chicago.

After endorsing and supporting candidates such as Niles Sherman and Gus Savage, Brookins decided to run for office himself. In 1982, he ran for a seat in the Illinois House of Representatives and won, serving there through 1986. He then decided to run for the Illinois Senate and, once again, he was successful. While in office, Brookins was Chairman of the Transportation Committee. He also served on the Veteran's Affairs, Appropriations and Labor Committees. One of his achievements was the passage of a bill to allow voters to register anywhere in the State of Illinois. This resulted in the registration of a record number of African Americans in Illinois.

Since leaving the Illinois General Assembly in 1992, Brookins has remained active as the owner of the Brookins Funeral Home. He and his wife are the parents of three children, Howard Jr., Andrea and Rhonda. He is affiliated

with several organizations and serves on the boards of the DuSable Museum of African American History, the Illinois Department of Corrections and Little Company of Mary Hospital. He is also a Mason.

Brookins was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on July 7, 2000.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Howard Brookins, Sr. was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on July 7, 2000, in Springfield, Illinois, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. State senator The Honorable Howard Brookins, Sr. (1932 -) is the owner of Brookins Funeral Home, and has served in both the Illinois House of Representatives and the Illinois State Senate.

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:

Brookins, Howard, Sr., 1932-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Haynes, Frank (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Brookins, Howard, Sr., 1932---Interviews

African American politicians--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Illinois

Occupations:

State Senator

HistoryMakers® Category:

PoliticalMakers

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 The Honorable Howard Brookins, Sr., July 7, 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 The Honorable Howard Brookins, Sr., Section
A2000_044_001_001, TRT: 0:58:51 ?

Howard Brookins, Sr. gives background information about his mother, father and grandparents and tells how his family migrated to Chicago, Illinois. He describes his parents' personalities and how they influenced his personality. Brookins then talks about himself as a youth and mentions his entrepreneurial success selling snowballs to neighborhood children. Brookins describes the scene of Chicago during his youth. He talks about games he and his friends would play and places within the city where they would go. He then gives background information on his sisters and brother. Howard Brookins tells about his years at DuSable High School and about a teacher who had an impact on his life, as well as other individuals within the community who helped and inspired him. He then goes in depth about his careers in the U.S. Army and Chicago Police Department, telling stories and revealing his feelings during that time. Brookins then talks about different African Americans within law enforcement. Next, Howard Brookins tells the story about being led away from law enforcement and back into school where he studied to become a funeral director. He eventually purchased a funeral home and he talks about the social and political duties of funeral directors. Brookins then states his opinion on today's professionals and the lack of commitment they have to their communities. He then details how his involvement with the community as a funeral director led to his run for political office. Howard Brookins talks in depth about his dealings with the Illinois General Assembly and mentions politicians with whom he worked, legislation with which he's been involved and some of his personal political views.

Childhood and youth--Illinois--Chicago.

African American families--Illinois--Chicago.

African American neighborhoods--Illinois--Chicago.

Role models.

United States--Armed Forces--African Americans.

Chicago (Ill.). Police Department--African Americans.

Illinois. General Assembly.

Funeral homes--Illinois--Chicago--South Side.

Political participation--Illinois--Chicago.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Howard Brookins, Sr., Section
A2000_044_001_002, TRT: 0:19:42 ?

Howard Brookins states his opinions on African American legislators currently involved in Illinois politics. He then talks about his hopes and fears for the black community. Brookins describes what he'd like his legacy to be and how he'd like to be remembered. He then explains that Dr. Louis Rawls most influenced his life. Following are photographs narrated by Howard Brookins in which he appears with family, friends and colleagues.

African American communities.

Mentoring.

Photographs.

African American politicians.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Howard Brookins, Sr., Section
A2000_044_001_003, TRT: ?

Howard Brookins states his opinions on African American legislators currently involved in Illinois politics. He then talks about his hopes and fears for the black community. Brookins describes what he'd like his legacy to be and how he'd like to be remembered. He then explains that Dr. Louis Rawls most influenced his life. Following are photographs narrated by Howard Brookins in which he appears with family, friends and colleagues.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Howard Brookins, Sr., Section A2000_044_001_004, TRT: ?

The Honorable Howard Brookins, Sr. narrates a collection of photographs.