

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Richard Pegue

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Pegue, Richard, 1943-2009
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Richard Pegue,
Dates:	January 24, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:57:50).
Abstract:	Radio personality and radio program director Richard Pegue (1943 - 2009) became the music director at WVON Radio in 1968. When WVON was sold in 1975, Pegue went to WGCI, where he worked as a program director and fill-in disc jockey. In 1993, Pegue began appearing every Friday at a Chicago dance club called Taste Entertainment, where he developed a following. Pegue also wrote and produced “I’m Not Ready to Settle Down” which still enjoys regular air play. Pegue was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 24, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_011
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Richard Pegue was born on July 29, 1943, in Chicago to a beautician and a policeman. His father died in the line of duty when he was only two years old. Pegue would go on to develop a strong career in radio.

This career began at age eleven, when Pegue's grandmother gave him a reel-to-reel tape recorder for his birthday. By sixteen, he was using his recorder to D.J. at dances at South Side schools. He even formed a doo-wop group, the Belvederes, at Hirsch High School. After graduating in 1961, Pegue worked bagging groceries at Del Farm Foods and selling records at Met Music. While working both jobs, Pegue still found time to attend radio broadcasting classes at Columbia College.

Pegue continued performing doo-wop with a group called the Norvells. In 1965, Pegue wrote and produced “I’m Not Ready to Settle Down.” Performed by the Cheers, the song still enjoys radio airplay today. In 1968, he became the music director at WVON Radio. When WVON was sold in 1975, Pegue found work at various radio stations in Chicago and Northwest Indiana, including WOPA and WGCI, where he worked as a program director and fill-in disc jockey. In 1987, he returned to WGCI and facilitated a popular format change to urban oldies, or dusties. He stayed with the station for thirteen years. Then in 1993, Pegue began appearing every Friday at a Chicago dance club called Taste Entertainment, where he developed a following. In 1996, Pegue attended a movie theater with his wife, Sevina, and suffered a stroke. He spent six months recovering before recovering enough to work. In 2000, Pegue returned to WVON to spin his favorite tunes.

Pegue passed away on March 3, 2009 at the age of 66.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Richard Pegue was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on January 24, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Radio personality and radio program director Richard Pegue (1943 - 2009) became the music director at WVON Radio in 1968. When WVON was sold in 1975, Pegue went to WGCI, where he worked as a program director and fill-in disc jockey. In 1993, Pegue began appearing every Friday at a Chicago dance club called Taste Entertainment, where he developed a following. Pegue also wrote and produced “I’m Not Ready to Settle Down” which still enjoys regular air play.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

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

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:

Pegue, Richard, 1943-2009

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Pegue, Richard, 1943-2009--Interviews

Organizations:

Occupations:

Radio Personality

Radio Program Director

HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

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 Richard Pegue, January 24, 2002. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 2/5/2020 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 Richard Pegue, Section
A2002_011_001_001, TRT: 0:29:38 2002/01/24

Radio personality Richard Pegue remembers his growing up in Chicago, Illinois, during the 1940s and 1950s. He discusses the death of his police officer father when he was three and his family's move into the majority-white Chatham neighborhood where he was the first black pupil at Cornell Elementary School. He remembers his early interest in music, listening to Al Benson's radio program, experimenting with a tape recorder he got when he was eleven, and playing with friends in a doo-wop group, The Belvederes, which they started in grammar school and continued throughout their years at Hirsch High School.

Video Oral History Interview with Richard Pegue, Section
A2002_011_001_002, TRT: 0:30:04 2002/01/24

Radio personality Richard Pegue talks about the beginnings of his career in music as a teenager on Chicago's South Side, where he and his friends from Hirsch High School listened to disc jockeys like 'Jam With Sam' Evans spinning doo-wop records on WGES and sought fame singing in their own group, The Belvederes. The young Pegue also started dee-jaying at parties, and working at Maurie Alpert's Met Music Record Store. Alpert also had a small record label, Penny Records, and Pegue produced a local group, The Cheers, recording a song he had written, "I'm Not Ready to Settle Down." Pegue also talks briefly about studying radio, television and photography at Columbia College in Chicago.

Video Oral History Interview with Richard Pegue, Section

A2002_011_001_003, TRT: 0:28:40 2002/01/24

Radio personality Richard Pegue talks about the Chicago music scene of the late 1950s and 1960s and compares the "Chicago sound" with other distinctive regional rhythm and blues styles of the time. In addition to his own band The Belvederes (later The Norvells) Pegue discusses other Chicago groups, the record companies Vee Jay and Chess, radio DJs Herb Kent and Russ Vanoy and Maury Alpert's Nicolet Music publishing company. He also shares his thoughts on the positive changes over the years in musicians' awareness of the business side of music.

Video Oral History Interview with Richard Pegue, Section
A2002_011_001_004, TRT: 0:31:10 2002/01/24

Radio personality Richard Pegue looks back on his experience working at WVON-AM radio in Chicago, Illinois, where he became music director in 1968. He discusses the conflict of interest in Leonard Chess owning both Chess Records and WVON, analyzes the "down home" black image that made the station number one, recalls popular promotions and talks about his relationship with mentor Herb Kent and his first on-air slot on a late-night radio show.

Video Oral History Interview with Richard Pegue, Section
A2002_011_001_005, TRT: 0:30:22 2002/01/24

Radio personality Richard Pegue looks back on his career from the late 1960s through the 1990s including both on-air work and management at radio stations, writing commercial jingles and promoting dance party events. He talks about his enduring love for "dusties"--black music from the 1950s-1970s. He also comments on fellow DJ Pervis Spann's live music promotion work and describes Leonard Chess, the white Jewish owner of Chess Records and WVON radio, as a tough boss but not an exploiter, who had a good relationship with his black employees and musicians on his label.

Video Oral History Interview with Richard Pegue, Section
A2002_011_001_006, TRT: 0:27:56 2002/01/24

Radio personality Richard Pegue remembers learning to arrange music from Johnny Pate. He also discusses his regret that black radio has become a more technical,

"cold" business and has lost the strong personal element of connection between listeners and on-air personalities that used to exist at stations like WVON in earlier decades.