Overview of the Collection

Repository: The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator: Crooks, Kenneth
Title: The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Kenneth Crooks,
Dates: March 16, 2002
Bulk Dates: 2002
Physical Description: 3 Betacam SP videocassettes (1:23:41).
Abstract: Nonprofit chief executive Kenneth Crooks (1931 - ) is the president of the Columbus, Georgia Urban League. Crooks was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 16, 2002, in Columbus, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification: A2002_016
Language: The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Georgian civic leader Kenneth Crooks, Jr. was born in Boston, Massachusetts on September 12, 1931. He attended elementary school in Hampton, Virginia and secondary school in Jamaica, West Indies. Crooks graduated in 1957 from the University of Massachusetts with a Bachelors Degree of Business Administration and received a Masters of Business Administration from Atlanta University in 1962.

Crooks went to work for the National Urban League in its Regional Office in Atlanta, Georgia, covering twelve southern states in 1962. His responsibilities there included providing technical support for local Urban Leagues and developing new affiliates in the South. Crooks remained at the Urban League until 1991, taking time off in 1972 to assist Maynard Jackson's first campaign for Mayor of Atlanta. During his tenure at the Urban League, he worked in Economic Development and Employment, Education, Housing, Counseling and Community Awareness programs. He also developed programs for youth in fine arts, creating the Summer Youth Academy, the "Do the Right Thing" Rallies and brought the Chattahoochee Court-Appointed Special Advocates program for deprived and neglected children to the community.

In 1993, Crooks moved to Columbus, Georgia to serve as President of the Urban League of Greater Columbus. He had previously held the position of Community Service Specialist and Assistant Director of Development at the Fort Valley State College. Crooks also serves as Special Assistant to the pastor at Fourth Street Missionary Baptist Church. He has received several awards recognizing his service to the community, including "Man of the Year" for 2001, given by the Men's Progressive Club of Columbus.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Kenneth Crooks was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson and Samuel Adams on March 16, 2002, in Columbus, Georgia, and was recorded on 3 Betacam SP videocassettes. Nonprofit
chief executive Kenneth Crooks (1931 - ) is the president of the Columbus, Georgia Urban League.

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:

Kenneth Crooks

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Kenneth Crooks--Interviews

African American civic leaders.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Urban League of Greater Columbus
HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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


Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 6/19/2012 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, March 16, 2002

Video Oral History Interview with Kenneth Crooks, Section A2002_016_001_001, TRT: 0:30:10 2002/03/16

Kenneth B. Crooks, Jr. discusses his family background and childhood. Crooks was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on September 12, 1931. Crooks’ parents were both born in Jamaica but met in the United States in the 1920s and had four children: Cynthia May Crooks Carpenter; Kenneth B. Crooks, Jr.; Sylvia Amelia Crooks Wunderlich; and Nella Crooks Jenkins. Crooks’ Quaker father was a Harvard graduate who taught biology at the Hampton Institute in Virginia. In 1941, Crooks’ father moved the family to Hector’s River, Jamaica, where he worked as the headmaster of Happy Grove School and the pastor of Seaside Friends Church. Crooks elaborates on his sisters’ backgrounds before identifying a few childhood memories such as the 1936 flood in Hampton, Virginia, and climbing coconut trees and picking bananas in Jamaica. Crooks...
ends by discussing his education at the University of Massachusetts and being drafted into the army as a medic.
Harvard University--20th century.
Hampton Institute.
Hampton (Va.).
Draft--United States.
African Americans--Education.
African Americans--Social life and customs—Virginia.
World War, 1939-1945--African Americans.
Happy Grove School (Hectors River, Jamaica)
University of Massachusetts (Amherst campus)
Society of Friends--Education--Jamaica.
Crooks, Kenneth Bronstorph M., 1905-1959

Video Oral History Interview with Kenneth Crooks, Section A2002_016_001_002, TRT: 0:29:45 2002/03/16

Kenneth B. Crooks, Jr. discusses his life after the military. Upon his father’s death, Crooks moved to Grambling, Louisiana, to care for his mother where he worked as an accounting assistant at Grambling State University. Once his mother obtained her graduate degree, she moved to work in Fort Valley, Georgia, so Crooks went to graduate school at [Clark] Atlanta University. There he became involved with the student movement for desegregation by serving as the student body president. After graduation, he stayed at Atlanta University as Special Assistant to the President where he formed the first placement office. Crooks was then contacted by Clarence Coleman from the National Urban League in Atlanta who offered him a similar position which he accepted. Crooks then discusses some history of the Urban League including the “New Thrust,” his life philosophy, and begins to explain his role in Maynard Jackson’s election.

Atlanta University Center (Ga.) —History—20th century.
Atlanta University—History—20th century.
Student movements--United States--History--20th century.
National Urban League. Southern Regional Office.
Young, Whitney M.

Video Oral History Interview with Kenneth Crooks, Section A2002_016_001_003, TRT: 0:23:46 2002/03/16

Kenneth B. Crooks, Jr. discusses the National Urban League and his perception of three of the leaders’ management styles: Whitney M. Young, Jr., Vernon E. Jordan, and Hugh B. Price. Crooks explains the history of the Columbus, Georgia, Urban League as well as his involvement in rebuilding it in the 1990s. Crooks also contemplates the role of the church in the black community, especially for younger generations, before pondering his legacy.

African American churches--Georgia.
Young, Whitney M.
Jordan, Vernon E. (Vernon Eulion), 1935-
Price, Hugh B.
National Urban League--Administration.
African Americans--Education.