

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Na'im Akbar

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Akbar, Na'im
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Na'im Akbar,
Dates:	April 22, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:32:00).
Abstract:	Psychology professor and publisher Na'im Akbar (1944 -) pioneered the African-centered approach to psychology and founded one of the first Black psychology programs in the United States at Morehouse College. Akbar was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 22, 2002, in Tallahassee, Florida. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_048
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Publisher, psychologist, psychology professor, and public speaker Na'im Akbar was born on April 26, 1944, in Tallahassee, Florida. Originally given the name Luther Benjamin Weems, Jr., Akbar changed his name in 1971, after joining the Nation of Islam. Akbar attended the Florida A & M University Laboratory School from grades K-12, graduating in 1961. Akbar attended the University of Michigan for the completion of his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in psychology.

Prior to attending the University of Michigan, Akbar lived within a completely

African American social environment. His freshman year of college marked the first time that he had real contact with whites. At the University of Michigan, Akbar was active with the Black Action Movement (BAM) strike that closed down classes for three weeks during the late 1960s. After receiving his Ph.D., Akbar accepted a position in the psychology department at Morehouse College in Atlanta. There, he instituted Morehouse's first Black psychology course and eventually developed probably the first Black psychology program at a Historically Black College or University. Within two years, he became chair of the department.

Akbar left Morehouse after five years to work with the Nation of Islam's headquarters in Chicago to start their Office of Human Development. After two years, Akbar joined the faculty of Norfolk State University, again instituting courses in black psychology. In 1979, Akbar accepted a faculty position at Florida State University. In 1971, Akbar became active with the Association of Black Psychologists, the largest Black mental health professional organization in the world. He has served on the association's board for numerous terms and was elected its president in 1987. The association has bestowed all of its most prestigious awards on Akbar due to his professional contributions.

Akbar continues to teach a specialized course on the psychology of the African American at Florida State University. In the late 1980s, he formed his own publishing company, Mind Productions, and private consulting company, Na'im Akbar Consultants, to bring his teaching to a wider audience.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Na'im Akbar was conducted by Samuel Adams on April 22, 2002, in Tallahassee, Florida, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Psychology professor and publisher Na'im Akbar (1944 -) pioneered the African-centered approach to psychology and founded one of the first Black psychology programs in the United States at Morehouse College.

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:

Akbar, Na'im

Adams, Samuel (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Akbar, Na'im --Interviews

African American quilts.

Florida State University--Faculty--Interviews.

Association of Black Psychologists (U.S.).

Universities and colleges--Faculty--Georgia--Atlanta--Interviews.

Nation of Islam (Chicago, Ill.).

Race relations--Michigan--Ann Arbor.

Boycotts--Florida--Tallahassee.

African American authors--Interviews.

Authors and publishers--Interviews.

African American college teachers--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Florida State University

Occupations:

Psychology Professor

Publisher

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers|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 Na'im Akbar, April 22, 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 Na'im Akbar, Section
A2002_048_001_001, TRT: 0:31:11 2002/04/22

Psychologist Na'im Akbar discusses his family members, specifically his parents, his aunt, his maternal grandparents, and his paternal grandparents. He discusses how his parents first met during World War II. Akbar remembers

his childhood neighborhood in Tallahassee, Florida during the fifties and sixties. Specifically, Akbar discusses how his childhood memories of traveling, education, and theater have impacted his adult life.

African American quilts.

Florida State University--Faculty--Interviews.

Association of Black Psychologists (U.S.).

Universities and colleges--Faculty--Georgia--Atlanta--Interviews.

Nation of Islam (Chicago, Ill.).

Race relations--Michigan--Ann Arbor.

Boycotts--Florida--Tallahassee.

African American authors--Interviews.

Authors and publishers--Interviews.

African American college teachers--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Na'im Akbar, Section
A2002_048_001_002, TRT: 0:30:31 2002/04/22

Psychologist and professor Na'im Akbar describes his childhood and youth in Tallahassee, Florida. Akbar talks about the positive influence of the city's black community, naming mentors and role models. Akbar also describes his life as a student in Tallahassee's school system, explaining his emphasis on education, and discussing his extracurricular activities. Akbar then recalls the Tallahassee bus boycott of 1956.

Video Oral History Interview with Na'im Akbar, Section
A2002_048_001_003, TRT: 0:29:30 2002/04/22

Psychologist Na'im Akbar explains his experience of the 1956 Tallahassee Bus Boycott as a teenager. He reflects on the reactions of his community to the demonstrations. In addition, he remembers feeling helpless and his fear of the whites' responses. Akbar also discusses his initial fear of competing with whites when he was admitted to the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor in 1961. Finally, he reflects on the relations between black and white students on this campus and the campus of Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, Michigan.

Video Oral History Interview with Na'im Akbar, Section

A2002_048_001_004, TRT: 0:29:19 2002/04/22

Psychologist Na'im Akbar briefly discusses the resistance to Black Studies in higher education. He discusses his decision to major in psychology in college and, in addition, some of his early research mentors at the University of Michigan. Akbar also discusses the social environment of the 1960s and how this influenced his African centered psychology research goals, which ultimately included his dissertation research. Akbar also remembers confronting his own feelings of racial inferiority while at college. Finally, Akbar briefly mentions his joining the Association of Black Psychologists and his birth name, Luther Weems, Jr.

Video Oral History Interview with Na'im Akbar, Section
A2002_048_001_005, TRT: 0:29:56 2002/04/22

Psychologist Na'im Akbar details his experiences as a faculty member at Morehouse College in the mid-1970s. He describes how he was introduced to the Nation of Islam and, additionally, why he decided to join. Akbar also discusses how the teachings of the Nation of Islam corresponded to his paradigm of Black Psychology. Furthermore, Akbar discusses his role in the development of Black Psychology as a discipline. Finally, he discusses his move to Chicago, Illinois in 1975 to focus his work on the Nation of Islam.

Video Oral History Interview with Na'im Akbar, Section
A2002_048_001_006, TRT: 0:30:18 2002/04/22

Psychologist Na'im Akbar discusses his experiences working for the Nation of Islam in Chicago, Illinois during the mid-1970s. Additionally, he discusses the process by which he met and married his wife as a member of the Nation of Islam. Akbar discusses his experience as a faculty member at Norfolk State University and his subsequent move to his current university, Florida State University in 1979. Akbar details his crucial role in the development of Black psychology as well as his involvement in the Association of Black Psychologists. Finally, Akbar discusses the role of black psychologists and the African American community's changing opinions of psychologists.

Video Oral History Interview with Na'im Akbar, Section
A2002_048_001_007, TRT: 0:31:15 2002/04/22

Psychologist Na'im Akbar discusses the cultural differences among blacks and whites. In addition, he discusses the potential of the Black church and Black psychologists working together. He also discusses the differences between Eurocentric and Afrocentric psychology. Akbar also describes his hopes and concerns for the black community, his legacy and how he wants to be remembered. Finally, Akbar shares a multitude of personal photographs.

Family history.

Education--Illinois--Chicago.

Depressions--1929.