

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Edward "Buzz" Palmer

---

## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Palmer, Edward, 1936-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Edward "Buzz" Palmer,
<b>Dates:</b>	January 24, 2013, July 26, 2002 and June 14, 2002
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2002 and 2013
<b>Physical Description:</b>	9 Betacame SP videocassettes uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:14:45).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Community leader Edward "Buzz" Palmer (1936 - 2021) teaches at the University of Illinois in Chicago. He served as Chairman of Chicago's Sister Cities Committee under Mayor Harold Washington. Palmer also served as chairman of the Senate Advisory Committee on South Africa. Palmer is the President of the Black Press Institute; the Director of the People's Program and the Founder and Executive Director of Comprand, Inc. Palmer was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 24, 2013, July 26, 2002 and June 14, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2002_157
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

---

## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Globalist, civic activist and organizer Edward L. "Buzz" Palmer was born on May 13, 1936, in Chicago and grew up in Chicago's Englewood community.

In the 1960s, Palmer joined the Chicago Police Department and founded the African American Patrolman's League. Motivated by his experiences during his youth and during his career with the Chicago Police Department, Palmer became active in the community and developed an expertise in international urban affairs. He brought these academic interests into the classes that he taught at UIC, where he later became a senior fellow for the Institute for Government and Public Affairs, and continues to be involved with UIC's Great City Institute.

Palmer served as Chairman of Chicago's Sister Cities Committee under Mayor Harold Washington. He and his wife, former state of Illinois Senator Alice Palmer, have been committed to stimulating African American involvement in and awareness of foreign policy issues. Palmer served as chairman of the Senate Advisory Committee on South Africa and acts as a confidante to Prime Minister Michael Manly of Jamaica; Glyn Ford, Member of European Parliament (MEP) for the UK; and Harlem Desirs, MEP for France. In these capacities, he advises policy makers on the issues surrounding urban instability.

He is a member of the International Board of United Townships in Paris; the President of the Black Press Institute; the Director of the People's Program and the Founder and Executive Director of Comprand, Inc.

Palmer passed away on April 11, 2021.

---

# Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Edward "Buzz" Palmer was conducted by Larry Crowe on January 24, 2013, July 26, 2002 and June 14, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 9 Betacame SP videocassettes uncompressed MOV digital video files. Community leader Edward "Buzz" Palmer (1936 - 2021) teaches at the University of Illinois in Chicago. He served as Chairman of Chicago's Sister Cities Committee under Mayor Harold Washington. Palmer also served as chairman of the Senate Advisory Committee on South Africa. Palmer is the President of the Black Press Institute; the Director of the People's Program and the Founder and Executive Director of Comprand, Inc.

---

# 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:

Palmer, Edward, 1936-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Bieschke, Paul (Videographer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Palmer, Edward, 1936---Interviews

---

---

University of Illinois Chicago Professional Colleges--Faculty--Interviews

---

African American political consultants--Interviews

---

African American political scientists--Interviews

---

African American politicians--Interviews

---

## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

---

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

---

## Occupations:

Community Leader

---

## 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

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Edward "Buzz" Palmer, January 24, 2013, July 26, 2002 and June 14, 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 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 Edward "Buzz" Palmer, Section A2002\_157\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:45 ?

Edward "Buzz" Palmer was born on May 13, 1936 to Edward "Buzz" Palmer and Ruth Woodson Palmer in Chicago, Illinois. His mother was from Holly Springs, Mississippi. Her mother was Native American. Palmer's mother was in Chicago during the Race Riot of 1919. Palmer's paternal grandmother was from Germany and a descendent of the French Huguenots. His paternal grandfather was a boxer from Algiers, Louisiana. Palmer's father was raised on the North Side of Chicago where he experienced much racial discrimination as a child. Palmer describes his childhood in the Chicago's Englewood neighborhood and his realization of class divisions as a boy. He learned to box from the son of Judge H. Parker, founder of Parker House Sausage. Palmer once sustained a head injury after a fight with racist students while attending Lindblom Technical High School. He describes his high school experience and his political education at the Ogden Hill YMCA. He joined the U.S. Air Force in 1955 and was selected as an intelligence analyst.

Video Oral History Interview with Edward "Buzz" Palmer, Section A2002\_157\_001\_002, TRT: 0:30:55 ?

Edward "Buzz" Palmer was an avid reader as a child, but never aspired to attend college because of his family's lack of financial resources. As a student at Lindblom Technical High School in Chicago, Illinois, Palmer seldom applied himself in class except the influence of Mrs. Manekis. Although he was bored in the classroom, Palmer enjoyed participating in debate. Raised with three siblings, he describes the memories of his upbringing, learning to box, and the development of his militant personality. After joining the U.S. Air Force in 1955 at the age of eighteen, Palmer's test scores qualified him as an intelligence analyst. His security clearance was one degree above top secret. Palmer describes his training, military intelligence, and Cold War drafts. He reflects upon the military's expectation of suicide with security breaches and the U-2 incident in 1960. While in the military, Palmer became critical of rote nationalism and patriotism. Palmer also describes his approach to debate and strategy.

Video Oral History Interview with Edward "Buzz" Palmer, Section A2002\_157\_002\_003, TRT: 0:30:40 ?

Edward "Buzz" Palmer continues to describe the U-2 incident in 1960. After Palmer entered the U.S. Air Force at the age of eighteen, he served as an intelligence analyst until the age of twenty-four and could not disclose the true nature of his service in the Air Force. He struggled to find a job after leaving the military, working as a bus driver and at the post office before joining the Chicago Police Department. A gifted organizer, Palmer started the Afro-American Patrolmen's League in 1968 to protect black leaders like HistoryMaker Reverend Jesse L. Jackson after the assassination of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Palmer talks about the influx of domestic and international political assassinations during the 1960s. He also describes Chicago politics during the 1960s, from the "silent six" to Reverend Dr. Martin

Luther King's marches in the city. After two years at the Afro-American Patrolmen's League, Palmer was asked to step down after the assassination of Black Panther Fred Hampton.

Video Oral History Interview with Edward "Buzz" Palmer, Section A2002\_157\_002\_004, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Edward "Buzz" Palmer describes Mayor Harold Washington's bid for U.S. Congress and names those important to Mayor Washington's mayoral campaign in 1983 like HistoryMakers Lutrelle "Lu" F. Palmer and Vernon Jarrett. Palmer convinced Washington to make amends with HistoryMaker Reverend Jesse L. Jackson. He talks about Richard Durham, who was hired by Elijah Muhammad as the editor of "Muhammad Speaks". Durham wrote "Bird of the Iron Feather," a TV series based on Palmer's life and directed by HistoryMaker Okoro Harold Johnson. Palmer believes Durham significantly shaped Mayor Harold Washington's political ideology. Palmer established the Black Press Institute in 1982 and he worked closely with Jan Carew. The Black Press Institute allowed Palmer to meet the editor of "Pravda" in Moscow, Swedish prime minister Olof Palme, Jamaican prime minister Michael Manley, Mexican President Luis Echeverria, and Glyn Ford. Palmer also mentions Rob Mier, Bill Ware, HistoryMaker Calvin O. Butts, Harlem Desir, and Louis Martin.

Video Oral History Interview with Edward "Buzz" Palmer, Section A2002\_157\_002\_005, TRT: 0:30:15 ?

Edward "Buzz" Palmer talks about racial discrimination in the Chicago Police Department (CPD) and his leadership of the Afro-American Patrolmen's League. He highlights Tom Mitchell's role in the League and the organization's influence on policing in Chicago including Judge Prentice Marshall's institution of a hiring quota in the CPD. After Palmer left the League, he formed Comprand, a health planning agency on Chicago's South Side. At Comprand, Palmer worked with legislators like Dick Newhouse, Harold Washington, and Illinois Senate President Cecil Partee to increase the enrollment of black students at the University of Illinois (UIC) College of Medicine. Today, the college has one of the highest rates of minority medical student enrollments in the nation. Palmer also worked to establish the CAHMPs program at the Illinois Institute of. Although Palmer was captivated with Malcolm X during the 1960s, in retrospect, he believes Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s nonviolent activism was truly revolutionary.

Video Oral History Interview with Edward "Buzz" Palmer, Section A2002\_157\_003\_006, TRT: 0:30:36 ?

Edward "Buzz" Palmer describes the appointment of his mentor, Richard "Dick" Durham as the editor of Muhammed Speaks. Durham influenced black intellectuals like Mayor Harold Washington and HistoryMakers Vernon Jarrett, Lutrelle "Lu" F. Palmer, and Gus Savage. Palmer talks about Durham's relationship with Indonesian President Sukarno and the Bandung Conference. Palmer worked with Durham to form the Black Press Institute in 1982 and Durham introduced Palmer to Kaarle Nordenstreng, president of the International Organization of Journalists [IOJ]. Palmer talks about his affiliation with IOJ which gave black journalists the opportunity to learn from socialist countries. He also describes the media's role in Mikhail Gorbachev's ascent. Palmer recounts Durham's funeral and Mayor Harold Washington's mayoral campaign. During the campaign, Palmer hosted Washington's first fundraiser. Another important campaign contributor was HistoryMaker Conrad Worrill, who organized a rally at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

University of Illinois Chicago Professional Colleges--Faculty--Interviews.

African American political consultants--Interviews.

African American political scientists--Interviews.

African American politicians--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Edward "Buzz" Palmer, Section A2002\_157\_003\_007, TRT: 0:30:42 ?

Edward "Buzz" Palmer describes his affiliation with the International Organization of Journalists [IOJ]. The IOJ gave Palmer the opportunity to meet the director of the Third World Institute in Mexico, former president Luis Echeverria. Echeverria supported Harold Washington's mayoral bid in Chicago's Mexican community. Palmer also describes how Jan Carew orchestrated a meeting between Palmer and Jamaican Prime Minister Michael Manley. Palmer became a trusted advisor to Manley and also formed a relationship with Manley's wife, Beverly Manley. Palmer talks about finding Edward Said and Ibrahim Abu-Lughod passage out of Beirut. He also describes meeting Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, the creation of a Swedish sister city for Chicago, and Palme's assassination in 1986. Palmer talks about well-known political assassinations in the 1960s of people like Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and President John F. Kennedy. He also discusses suspicious deaths in and outside of the United States.

Video Oral History Interview with Edward "Buzz" Palmer, Section A2002\_157\_003\_008, TRT: 0:31:13 ?

Edward "Buzz" Palmer describes his role in organizing the Transatlantic Conference on Race and Xenophobia in 2003 which met at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Howard University in Washington, D.C., and at the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium. Palmer also talks about organizing a lunch between UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and a group of African American journalists including Cliff Kelley and HistoryMakers Eugene Scott, N. Don Wycliff, Ellis Cose, William Raspberry, Clarence Page, and Les Payne. Palmer also talks about Maria Diedrich and CAAR [Colloquium for African American Research], an international conference for black academics. Palmer reflects upon his hopes and concerns for the African American community, his legacy, and how he would like to be remembered. He also describes his parents' view of his accomplishments and his determination to continue his role as an activist. He closes by narrating his photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Edward "Buzz" Palmer, Section A2002\_157\_003\_009, TRT: 0:09:39 ?

Edward "Buzz" Palmer continues to narrate his photographs.