

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Floyd Powell

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Powell, Floyd, 1946-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Floyd Powell,
Dates:	August 27, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:12:33).
Abstract:	Police chief Floyd Powell (1946 -) was the first African American Chief of Police in Wichita, Kansas. Powell was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 27, 2002, in Wichita, Kansas. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_177
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Floyd Powell was born in Crescent, Oklahoma on October 28, 1946. Shortly after his birth, his family relocated to Wichita, Kansas. Powell attended Isley Elementary School, Roosevelt Middle School and graduated from Wichita's East High School in 1964. He received his degree in Police Science from Wichita State University in 1972.

In 1966, following two years at Friends University in Wichita, Powell worked for the Boeing Corporation. He left Boeing in 1968, to pursue a career in law enforcement. During his twenty-one year career with the Wichita Police Department, he became the first African American to serve as Chief of Police. His

tenure as police chief was marked by a commitment to community involvement and victim outreach. Powell worked hard to build bridges between the police force and the city's minority communities. He developed special community action teams to work with officers addressing problems in low- income neighborhoods. One of his pet projects, the Teddy Bear Program, was directed at assisting the youngest victims of crime. Through this program, officers worked to comfort child victims with teddy bears. He also aggressively worked to increase minority recruitment for the department. Powell retired from the police force in 1989. That same year, he took a position as manager with his former employer Boeing.

Powell serves as the Funding Board of Director vice-president for the Boys and Girls Club of South Central Kansas. He is a father of four and resides in Wichita with his wife, Shirley.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Floyd Powell was conducted by Larry Crowe on August 27, 2002, in Wichita, Kansas, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Police chief Floyd Powell (1946 -) was the first African American Chief of Police in Witchita, Kansas.

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:

Powell, Floyd, 1946-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Powell, Floyd, 1946---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Wichita (Kan.)

Occupations:

Police Chief

HistoryMakers® Category:

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 Floyd Powell, August 27, 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 Floyd Powell, Section
A2002_177_001_001, TRT: 0:29:10 2002/08/27

Floyd Powell was born on October 28, 1946 in Crescent, Oklahoma, to Mattie Joe, who was born in 1924 in Tyler, Texas, and Leslie Powell, who was born in 1923 in the all black town of Tatums, Oklahoma. When he was a toddler, his family moved to Wichita, Kansas. Powell's mother was raised in Crescent, Oklahoma by her grandparents, the Greens. Powell's paternal grandmother, Savannah, was born in Wynnewood, Oklahoma; her mother was a Choctaw who was kidnapped by Savannah's father from her Reservation. Powell was the middle child between George and Betty Joe Powell. He attended integrated schools, which included Wichita Elementary School, followed by Roosevelt Junior High School and East High School in Wichita, Kansas. He was not interested in academics until attending high school, and he was talented in track and field. He ran track with future Olympian and Kansas State Senator Jim Ryun at East High School, where he graduated from in 1964.

Video Oral History Interview with Floyd Powell, Section
A2002_177_001_002, TRT: 0:29:40 2002/08/27

Floyd Powell graduated from East High School in Wichita, Kansas in 1964, and attended Wichita State University on a track scholarship. There, he was a member of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, though he later transferred to Friend's University in Wichita, Kansas. Powell joined the Wichita Police Department in 1968, which helped to fund his education as well as get him a deferment from being drafted into the Vietnam Conflict. He transferred back to Wichita State University to study police science, and he graduated in 1971. As a rookie police officer, he experienced discrimination; no minority officers were able to be promoted to commanding ranks in the police force. Powell was promoted to lieutenant in the 1970s, but could not be promoted to a commanding position. In 1977, the minority police officers in the Wichita Police Department got the Kansas State Justice Department to investigate. In 1979, Powell was promoted to Captain, which meant he commanded one of the Districts in Wichita, Kansas.

Video Oral History Interview with Floyd Powell, Section
A2002_177_001_003, TRT: 0:30:00 2002/08/27

Floyd Powell served as Captain in the Wichita Police Department in Kansas in the 1980s, commanding the Northeast District. In the majority black neighborhood, Powell developed a strong relationship between the community and the Wichita Police Department, and he particularly focused on developing relationships with the youth of the community. He served the Northeast Wichita community through the rise of drug crimes and arrests in the 1980s. Powell was later promoted to become the first black Major in the Wichita Police Department. In 1989, the Chief of Police Richard LaMunyon was removed. Powell was appointed to become first a Deputy Chief of Police that year, and then the interim Chief of Police of the Wichita Police Department, becoming the first African American appointed to the position. However, he was told by the City that they would appoint their next Chief of Police from outside the Wichita Police Department and subsequently, Powell was removed from the position of Chief of Police and he retired in 1989.

Video Oral History Interview with Floyd Powell, Section
A2002_177_001_004, TRT: 0:29:40 2002/08/27

Floyd Powell served as Captain and Major in the Wichita Police Department, where he commanded the police force for the Northeast District in Wichita, Kansas. While at Wichita Police Department, he developed community partners in the neighborhood and instilled community policing in conjunction with the Police Department's service. In 1989, he was appointed Deputy Chief of Police and interim Chief of Police, but he was removed that year. He then worked for Boeing Company in Wichita, Kansas, working with the Drug Free Workplace Program, managing their Employee Assistance Program, managing their safety department, and then becoming director of the Boeing Medical Clinic. Then, Powell reflects upon his legacy. He reflects on the changes in the black community in Wichita, Kansas during his time with the Wichita Police Department from the 1960s through the 1980s. He describes his hopes and concerns for the black community, and the relationship between the black community and law enforcement.

Video Oral History Interview with Floyd Powell, Section

A2002_177_001_005, TRT: 0:14:03 2002/08/27

Floyd Powell describes how he wants to be remembered and reflects on what he is grateful for in his life. Then, Powell narrates his photographs.