

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Archie C. Epps, III

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## 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>	Epps, Archie C.
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Archie C. Epps, III,
<b>Dates:</b>	April 14, 2003
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2003
<b>Physical Description:</b>	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:52:20).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Academic administrator Archie C. Epps, III (1937 - 2003 ) was the former director of admissions at Harvard University and editor of Malcolm X Speeches at Harvard. Epps was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 14, 2003, in Belmont, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2003_079
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Former Harvard dean Archie C. Epps, III, was born on May 19, 1937, in Lake Charles, Louisiana. After graduating from high school, Epps attended Talladega College in Alabama where he earned his A.B. degree in 1958. Epps next attended the Harvard Divinity School, where he earned his bachelor's degree in theology and his certificate in educational management in 1961.

Epps began his professional career with Harvard the year he graduated, serving as a teaching assistant at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies. Politically active, Epps participated in a march on Washington in 1963, and would later be responsible for bringing Malcolm X, Ralph Ellison, and James Baldwin, to speak at Harvard; he edited a book in 1967 based on one of these guest appearances, *The Speeches of Malcolm X at Harvard*, which was reissued in 1991. In 1964, Epps was named assistant dean of Harvard, and six years later, he became the dean of students. During the turbulent 1960s and 1970s, Epps was often at the forefront of student activism, understanding the goals of both students and administrators. Epps was widely regarded by both sides of the debate as a keeper of the peace, though not all of his attempts were successful. During the 1980s and 1990s, Epps organized a series of conferences on economics, the result of which was a book, *Present at the Creation: The Fortieth Anniversary of the Marshall Plan*. Epps broke new ground again in 1992 by issuing Harvard's first handbook on race relations. Overcoming a series of health problems in 1995, Epps continued on at the university until his retirement in 2001.

A longtime member of Christ Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Epps was active with a number of other organizations as well. Epps also served as a trustee of the Boston Symphony Orchestra for twenty years; was an overseer of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston; and was a trustee of several schools.

Archie C. Epps, III, passed away on August 21, 2003; he was survived by his wife, Joan, and two sons.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Archie C. Epps, III was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 14, 2003, in Belmont, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Academic administrator Archie C. Epps, III (1937 - 2003 ) was the former director of admissions at Harvard University and editor of Malcolm X Speeches at Harvard.

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## 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®.

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## 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.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

Epps, Archie C.

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Epps, Archie C. --Interviews

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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Harvard University

## Occupations:

Academic Administrator

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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## 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 Archie C. Epps, III, April 14, 2003. 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).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Archie C. Epps, III, Section A2003\_079\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:30  
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Former Harvard University dean Archie Epps shares rich details from his childhood in Lake Charles, Louisiana. He discusses the origin of his family on a Lake Charles plantation and other family history, tracing his ancestors' transition from being slaves to being free. Epps recalls the family cleaning business and the death of his father while Archie was still a child. Epps also discusses his education at a Catholic high school and his undergraduate experience at

Talladega College.

Video Oral History Interview with Archie C. Epps, III, Section A2003\_079\_001\_002, TRT: 0:28:35  
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Former Harvard University dean Archie Epps details his undergraduate years at Talladega College and recalls confronting issues of race, color and class while enrolled there. He also recalls his matriculation at Harvard's School of Divinity. There is also a lengthy discussion about Epps' his first interaction with the Nation of Islam and Malcolm X. Epps recalls a debate he had with Malcolm, and offers detailed observations about Malcolm's life and philosophy. Epps also discusses his book, 'The Speeches of Malcolm X at Harvard'.

Video Oral History Interview with Archie C. Epps, III, Section A2003\_079\_001\_003, TRT: 0:27:10  
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Former Harvard University dean Archie Epps details how he landed a position as one of the youngest deans at Harvard during the turbulent 1960s. He explains how he used the position to improve the lives of black students, and describes tensions on campus during the Vietnam War that boiled over into protests against the administration. After sharing his thoughts about Malcolm X's assassination, Epps discusses his own involvement in the Civil Rights Movement, discussing his role as the Boston area coordinator for the March on Washington in 1963.

Video Oral History Interview with Archie C. Epps, III, Section A2003\_079\_001\_004, TRT: 0:26:05  
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Former Harvard University dean Archie Epps shares his hopes for black America and shares his thoughts on numerous issues such as race relations and affirmative action. Epps also considers his legacy and how he would like to be remembered. Epps died just four months after the completion of this interview.