Overview of the Collection

Repository: The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616
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Creator: Richards, Donald C.

Title: The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Donald C. Richards,

Dates: April 21, 2003

Bulk Dates: 2003

Physical Description: 4 Betacam SP videocassettes (1:47:20).

Abstract: Advertising executive, media executive, and association chief executive Donald C. Richards (1938 - ) worked for twenty-two years at Leo Burnett becoming the company's first African American vice president. Richards is a leading advocate for diversity and affirmative action in the advertising and entertainment industries. Richards was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 21, 2003, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.

Identification: A2003_085

Language: The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

A leading proponent of diversity and affirmative action in the marketing and entertainment industries, advertising executive Donald C. Richards was born in Chicago on February 24, 1938. Richards earned a B.A. in anthropology from the University of Chicago in 1959.

Richards taught high school for a year in Chicago before returning to the University of Chicago to earn his M.A. in history in 1962. He then spent three years at IBM as a systems manager before joining Leo Burnett Worldwide, one of the world's largest advertising agencies, in 1966. During his twenty-two years at Leo Burnett, Richards became the company's first African American vice president and managed accounts for such clients as Proctor and Gamble, McDonald's, Pillsbury and United Airlines. In his thirty years in advertising, Richards also worked on projects for Coca-Cola and Anheuser-Busch. He returned to Leo Burnett in 1990 to manage the company's global diversity program.

After serving as president of D.C. Richards & Associates, an ad agency specializing in multicultural marketing, Richards joined the Screen Actors Guild in New York as its associate national director of affirmative action and diversity. Richards develops and promotes educational programs, conferences and workshops designed to raise diversity awareness across the entertainment industry. He also works with professional associations of broadcasters and recording artists to help increase minority participation.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Donald C. Richards was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 21, 2003, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 4 Betacam SP videocassettes. Advertising executive, media
executive, and association chief executive Donald C. Richards (1938 - ) worked for twenty-two years at Leo Burnett becoming the company's first African American vice president. Richards is a leading advocate for diversity and affirmative action in the advertising and entertainment industries.

**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:**

Richards, Donald C.

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

**Subjects:**

African Americans--Interviews
Richards, Donald C.--Interviews

Advertising executives--Interviews

African American educators--Interviews

**Organizations:**

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)
The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Leo Burnett Company

Screen Actors Guild

D.C. Richards & Associates

**HistoryMakers® Category:**

- BusinessMakers
- 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**


**Processing Information**

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 2/5/2013 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, April 21, 2003**

Video Oral History Interview with Donald C. Richards, Section A2003_085_001_001, TRT: 0:29:30 2003/04/21
Donald Richards discusses his family history, which dates back to 1847, growing up in the Bronzeville community and moving into the neighborhood of West Chesterfield. Richards remembers growing up in a warm community in the Bronzeville area, which was not segregated unlike the West Chesterfield community his family moved into. Richards discusses overcoming racism as a youth and enjoying his childhood with friends, even though they could only attend venues designated for Blacks. Richards also discusses mentors, high school, religion and college.

Segregation--Illinois--Chicago.
Education, Higher--Illinois.

Video Oral History Interview with Donald C. Richards, Section A2003_085_001_002, TRT: 0:28:50 2003/04/21

Donald Richards discusses his educational experience at the University of Chicago where he studied the social sciences, archaeology, the Middle East and anthology. Richards feels that in addition to the Professors at the University of Chicago, he benefitted from being taught by world renown researchers such as William McNeal, Louie Gotchalk, Allison Davis, and Saul Tak who all taught with their original readings and from the Organization Methods and Principles journals. Richards's comments on the social atmosphere at U of C and on the political atmosphere in Chicago and at the University of Chicago. During the end of McCarthyism and the beginning of the civil rights movement, fair housing issues were occurring in Chicago. Richards taught at DuSable High School and worked at IBM before becoming involved with the ad agency business and working for Leo Burnett.

African American educators.

Video Oral History Interview with Donald C. Richards, Section A2003_085_001_003, TRT: 0:29:20 2003/04/21

Donald Richards discusses his enjoyment with working for the advertising agency business, favorite clients, professional and social responsibilities as an ad agency representative and executive. Richards explains the opportunities the business afforded him, how trends changed with the social climate in the United States and how working for Leo Burnett and in advertising helped to propel him to represent the other side of advertisements, which were the people behind the marketing campaigns. Richards explains how he becomes involved in the Screen Actors Guild.

Advertising.
Civil rights movements--United States.
African American business enterprises.

Video Oral History Interview with Donald C. Richards, Section A2003_085_001_004, TRT: 0:19:40 2003/04/21

Donald Richards explains the origins and roles of the Screen Actors Guild. Richards wants to increase visibility of minorities on screen. Richards wants to accurately portray the American scene in all areas of communication. His hopes and concerns for the Black Community today is that all of the things that divide us and make us second class citizens that through social activism, legislation and common sense that we will exercise rights at a faster pace than in the past and presently to make necessary changes. Donald Richards wants to be remembered as a person who was a good family person, raised successful children as in good people, who raised their own children. A person who came out of a parochial situation and grew exponentially to understand what occurred
around the world. He would like to be remembered as someone who people shared their experiences with in order to allow him to help them. A person who came to grow from experiencing world.

African Americans--Education (Secondary).
African Americans--Drug use.
African Americans--Economic conditions.