

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Kent B. Amos

Overview of the Collection

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| Repository: | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com |
| Creator: | Amos, Kent, 1944- |
| Title: | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Kent B. Amos, |
| Dates: | June 9, 2003 |
| Bulk Dates: | 2003 |
| Physical Description: | 6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:51:15). |
| Abstract: | Corporate executive, education chief executive, and elementary school principal Kent B. Amos (1944 -) is the founder of Community Academy Public Charter School and the Urban Family Institute. Before leaving the corporate realm to focus on his work supporting children and families, Amos worked for the Xerox Corporation. Amos was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 9, 2003, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| Identification: | A2003_126 |
| Language: | The interview and records are in English. |

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Born May 21, 1944, Kent Amos was raised in northwest Washington, D.C., where he was a track star at Calvin Coolidge High School before graduating and serving the U.S. Army in Vietnam. After his tour of duty, Amos graduated from Delaware State University and was hired by Xerox Corporation.

At Xerox, Amos became one of the company's most successful salespersons and was instrumental in increasing the number of African Americans in its sales force. Amos was promoted many times, becoming the youngest corporate director in Xerox history. Although Amos and his family relocated to several cities across the United States, they were able to return to Washington, D.C., where Amos and his wife first became involved in caring for at-risk children, offering shelter, financial support, and a nurturing environment to local youth. Amos felt compelled to do even more, and in the 1980s he left corporate America to devote himself full-time to helping families take care of their children. In 1991, Amos founded the Urban Family Institute (UFI), a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating urban neighborhoods where every family has the resources they need to ensure that children grow up with the close guidance, discipline, and nurturing, of caring adults.

In 1994, Amos also founded Kids House, a program designed to provide a safe, academically supportive after school program. Four years later, recognizing the unique opportunity of charter schools, Amos founded the Community Academy Public Charter School, where he served as principal and CEO. The Community Academy grew to become recognized as one of the leading charter schools in Washington, D.C., functioning as a national model.

Amos was featured on many local and national radio and television programs, including *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, and in newspapers, magazines, and books. Amos also frequently spoke on the issue of child-related public policy and received numerous citations, awards, and honors, for his community service. In 2002, Amos was ordained a

deacon, serving the congregation of Washington's Shiloh Baptist Church; he also served as the chairman of the Shiloh Community Development Corporation.

Amos and his wife, Carmen, remained close to their extended family in Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Kent B. Amos was conducted by Larry Crowe on June 9, 2003, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Corporate executive, education chief executive, and elementary school principal Kent B. Amos (1944 -) is the founder of Community Academy Public Charter School and the Urban Family Institute. Before leaving the corporate realm to focus on his work supporting children and families, Amos worked for the Xerox Corporation.

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:

Amos, Kent, 1944-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Amos, Kent, 1944---Interviews

African American executives--Interviews.

African American school principals--Interviews.

African American civic leaders--Washington (D.C.)--Interviews.

Vietnam War, 1961-1975.

African American veterans--Interviews.

Public schools--Washington (D.C.).

African American families.

African Americans--Genealogy.

African American mothers.

African American fathers.

Washington (D.C.).

Children.

Segregation.

African Americans--Religion.

World War, 1939-1945.

Popular music--1951-1960.

United States--Armed Forces--African Americans.

Race relations in the United States.

Vietnam War, 1961-1975.

United States--Army--African Americans--Social conditions.

Delaware State University.

Xerox Corporation.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Xerox Corporation

Occupations:

Corporate Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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 Kent B. Amos, June 9, 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).

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 Kent B. Amos, Section A2003_126_001_001, TRT: 0:29:48 ?

Business and civic leader Kent Amos shares his maternal and paternal family history along with memories of his mother and father. He describes his childhood in Washington, D.C. during and after World War II with discussions of streetcars, segregated basement movie theaters, segregated professional sports teams, and his childhood neighborhood. He also discusses his educational experiences. Finally, he discusses his ideas about religion and church.

African American executives--Interviews.

African American school principals--Interviews.

African American civic leaders--Washington (D.C.)--Interviews.

Vietnam War, 1961-1975.

African American veterans--Interviews.

Public schools--Washington (D.C.).

African American families.

African Americans--Genealogy.

African American mothers.

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Children.

Segregation.

African Americans--Religion.

World War, 1939-1945.

Popular music--1951-1960.

United States--Armed Forces--African Americans.

Vietnam War, 1961-1975.

United States. Army--African Americans.

Delaware State University.

Xerox Corporation.

Video Oral History Interview with Kent B. Amos, Section A2003_126_001_002, TRT: 0:29:33 ?

Kent Amos describes his educational experience, what he was like as a student, and the extracurricular activities in which he was involved. He also reflects on the popular dances and music when he was growing up as well as the emergence of television in the 1950s. He discusses growing up in the political environment in Washington, D.C., and how this affected his career aspirations. In addition, Amos discusses dropping out of college and entering into the United States Armed Forces, subsequently serving in the Vietnam War. Finally, he discusses the benefits of the military experience and the race relations he experienced while serving.

Video Oral History Interview with Kent B. Amos, Section A2003_126_001_003, TRT: 0:30:37 ?

Kent Amos explains that he graduated from Delaware State University and subsequently, returned to Vietnam. He also discusses his career with the Xerox Corporation, rising from an entry-level employee to a vice president in 1977. Furthermore, he describes his instrumental role in the formation of the Xerox Corporation's National Black Employees Association. Finally, he mentions receiving the NAACP Image Aware and the dangers of placing his son in a Washington, D.C., public school.

Video Oral History Interview with Kent B. Amos, Section A2003_126_001_004, TRT: 0:29:16 ?

Kent Amos discusses the difficulties he faced in choosing a public school for his son in Washington, D.C. He also describes how he affectionately adopted

eighty-seven youths to give them a better chance at life. He discusses the importance of values and his continued dependence on his faith. Additionally, he reflects on the influence of his parents and mentors on his life. Finally, Amos discusses some of the tragedies of his adopted children and, specifically, the need to reform the structures that contribute to social dysfunction.

Video Oral History Interview with Kent B. Amos, Section A2003_126_001_005, TRT: 0:30:21 ?

Kent Amos discusses the power of people collectively organizing for social change. He explains the philosophies of value systems and diversity at his school, the Community Academy Public Charter Schools in Washington, D.C. He also shares his hopes and concerns for the black community and his legacy. Finally, Amos shares a multitude of personal photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Kent B. Amos, Section A2003_126_001_006, TRT: 0:21:40 ?

Kent Amos shares more of his personal photographs.