

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Fred Jones

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Jones, Fred, 1948-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Fred Jones,
Dates:	June 26, 2003
Bulk Dates:	2003
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:12:20).
Abstract:	Event management chief executive, entertainment promoter, and music manager Fred Jones (1948 -) founded Summitt Entertainment. Prior to that, he was the tour manager for Isaac Hayes and the Isley Brothers. Jones was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 26, 2003, in Memphis, Tennessee. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2003_144
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Fred Jones, Jr., has devoted his life to entertaining others. Born January 2, 1948, in Memphis, Tennessee, to Lula and Freddie, Jones was the fourth of five children. He attended public schools in Memphis and then went on to earn his B.A. in 1971 from the University of Memphis.

While at the University of Memphis, Jones worked for Union Planters Bank as an internal auditor and assistant branch manager. Following graduation, however, Jones moved into the entertainment industry, working as a tour manager for Isaac Hayes until 1975. Jones then went on to do independent promotions, managing and producing events, for many in the entertainment industry. In 1984, Jones founded Summitt Management Corporation, where he currently serves as president.

During his career, Jones has created numerous entertainment promotions, including the Southern Heritage Classic Music and Football Weekend and the Southern Heritage Classic 2 Basketball Weekend, featuring ever-popular competitions among historically black colleges and universities. He also created the world-renowned Memphis Blues Festival. Jones has also brought Memphis some of its largest concerts and has taken concerts to African American audiences across the country.

Jones has been the recipient of numerous awards over the years, including the 2002 Award of Excellence from the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund; the 2002 African American Male Image Award for Business from Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity; the 2000 Outstanding Community Sales Award from the Sales and Marketing Executives of Memphis; and the 1996 Black Business of the Year Award from the Memphis Black Business Association. He is active in a number of civic organizations, including as a lifetime member with the NAACP, a member of Leadership Memphis, and as President of the Southern Heritage Foundation.

Jones and his wife, Carolyn, live in Memphis. They have six children.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Fred Jones was conducted by Larry Crowe on June 26, 2003, in Memphis, Tennessee, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Event management chief executive, entertainment promoter, and music manager Fred Jones (1948 -) founded Summitt Entertainment. Prior to that, he was the tour manager for Isaac Hayes and the Isley Brothers.

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:

Jones, Fred, 1948-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Jones, Fred, 1948---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Music Manager

HistoryMakers® Category:

MusicMakers

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 Fred Jones, June 26, 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 Fred Jones, Section A2003_144_001_001, TRT: 0:28:15 ?

Fred Jones was born in Memphis, Tennessee on January 2, 1948. His father, Freddie Jones, was born in Farrell, Mississippi. His mother, Lula Norwood Jones, was born in Nanafalia, Alabama in 1920. Jones maternal grandparents were sharecroppers in Alabama who lived through the Great Depression. Jones paternal and maternal relatives moved out of the South and into cities like Cleveland, Ohio, Chicago, Illinois, and Detroit, Michigan in search of opportunity during the Great Migration. During Jones' childhood, his father

worked as a brick cleaner and a longshoreman, and his mother was a homemaker. As a boy, Jones lived in a tenement flat in South Memphis, Tennessee with his family until the age of six. The family then moved to Cleaborn Homes, a public housing project in Memphis. In Memphis, Jones attended Alonzo Lott Elementary School, Portage Junior High School and Booker T. Washington High School. He recalls the sense of community in his childhood neighborhood and the deterioration of the projects over time.

Video Oral History Interview with Fred Jones, Section A2003_144_001_002, TRT: 0:29:05 ?

Fred Jones was raised in Cleaborn Homes, a housing project in Memphis, Tennessee. Residents of Cleaborn had to demonstrate the upkeep of their apartments during home inspections. In Memphis, Jones attended Alonzo Lott Elementary School. His favorite subject was math and he aspired to be an accountant like Jesse Turner, Sr., the first black CPA in. Jones also enjoyed playing sports. In Memphis, he attended Porter Junior High School where he joined the honor society and played trombone. Jones then went on to attend Booker T. Washington High School, where he played football with Oscar Reed. A serious knee injury near the end of Jones' senior football season prevented him from getting drafted for the Vietnam War. In high school, Jones met Olympians Wilma Rudolph and Bob Hayes. After graduating in 1966, Jones entered Memphis State College. Although he dropped out briefly due to poor performance, he quickly returned. He remembers the 1967 plane crash that killed Otis Redding and four members of the Bar-Kays.

Video Oral History Interview with Fred Jones, Section A2003_144_001_003, TRT: 0:29:15 ?

Fred Jones began his studies at Memphis State College in Memphis, Tennessee in 1966. During his student days, he worked in the audit department at Union Planters Bank, and at Flora's Flower Shop, Memphis' first black-owned floral shop. Jones describes his memories of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination in 1968, which reminded him of the lynching of Emmett Till. Jones also recounts the racial climate in Memphis after Dr. King's assassination. During his college years, Jones met figures like HistoryMaker Isaac Hayes, David Porter, The Soul Children, and Jim Stewart. After graduating from college in 1971, Jones began working for Hayes around the release of Hayes' album 'Shaft.' While with Hayes, Jones' duties included creating manifests and counting tickets; he also traveled widely. Jones talks about changes to technology and production costs in the recording industry. In 1975, Jones left Hayes to work as an entertainment promoter. He describes the first Southern Heritage Classic in 1990.

Video Oral History Interview with Fred Jones, Section A2003_144_001_004, TRT: 0:29:05 ?

Fred Jones shares anecdotes from working with artists like Count Basie, Bill Cosby and John Davidson, during his career as an entertainment promoter. He also recounts memorable rider requests from artists, none of which he found unreasonable. In the late 1970s, Jones began working as a promoter for the Isley Brothers. He describes his relationship with the Isley Brothers and the group's longstanding success. During the early 1980s, challenges Jones faced as a promoter led to him file for bankruptcy. He describes the process of rebuilding his business. After securing a corporate sponsorship from House of Seagram by working with Clyde Allen, Jones began promoting the Mississippi Delta Blues Festival and the San Francisco Blues Festival. Jones also created the Southern Heritage Classic in 1990, an annual rivalry football game between Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi, and Tennessee State University in Nashville, Tennessee. Components of the Classic include 'The Tom Joyner Sky Show' and concerts.

Video Oral History Interview with Fred Jones, Section A2003_144_001_005, TRT: 0:16:40 ?

Fred Jones believes that Memphis, Tennessee was unable to attract an NFL franchise team because the city did not commit to building a stadium. However, the city was able to secure an NBA franchise team: the Memphis Grizzlies. Jones describes his role in convincing the Grizzlies to move from Vancouver to Memphis in 2001. During the process, Jones agreed to buy a suite in the future basketball stadium and became one of many businesspeople in the community backing the stadium and the pursuit of the Grizzlies. He became one of the original owners of the Memphis Grizzlies and also galvanized support amongst local politician, business people and grassroots organizers. Jones hopes that the Memphis Grizzlies can help bridge the racial divide in Memphis. He concludes the interview by reflecting upon his hopes for the black community, his future plans, his legacy, and how he would like to be remembered.