

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Norm Van Lier

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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>	Van Lier, Norm, 1947-2009
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Norm Van Lier,
<b>Dates:</b>	November 4, 2003
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2003
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:20:15).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Basketball player Norm Van Lier (1947 - 2009 ) played for the Chicago Bulls and the the Cincinnati Royals. Van Lier led the NBA in assists his rookie year, making the NBA All-Defensive Team his second year. He appeared in three NBA All-Star games, was named to the NBA All-Defensive First Team three times and the NBA All-Defensive Second Team five times. Upon retirement, Van Lier became an analyst for Comcast Sports Net and Fox Sports Net. Van Lier was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 4, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2003_260
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Chicago Bulls basketball great Norm Van Lier was born in East Liverpool, Ohio on April 1, 1947. Van Lier played both basketball and football while attending Midland Lincoln High School. While there, he led the 1965 basketball team to an undefeated state championship. Van Lier went on to St. Francis College in

Loretto, Pennsylvania, where he continued to excel on the basketball court. He graduated with degrees in history and special education, and was the school's all-time assist leader.

In 1969, the Chicago Bulls selected Van Lier in the third round of the NBA draft, but he was traded to the Cincinnati Royals before the season began. With the Royals, Van Lier led the NBA in assists his rookie year, making the NBA All-Defensive Team his second year. Returning to the Chicago Bulls in 1971, Van Lier became part of the Bulls' powerhouse team of the 1970s, which included players like Bob Love and Jerry Sloan. He appeared in three NBA All-Star games, was named to the NBA All-Defensive First Team three times and the NBA All-Defensive Second Team five times. Van Lier's full court shot on January 19, 1977, against the San Antonio Spurs is ranked as one of the greatest moments in Chicago Bulls history.

Van Lier retired from basketball in 1979. He worked as a television basketball analyst for different stations (Fox Sports Net and Comcast Sports Net) since his retirement, as well as co-hosting a popular radio talk show, *The Bull and the Bear*, on WSCR-AM in Chicago. Committed to education and young people, Van Lier worked as a motivational speaker. He was also a member of Project Teamwork, a group formed by Reebok Foundation designed to improve racial and human rights sensitivity in school-age children.

Van Lier passed away on February 26, 2009 at the age of 61. He is survived by his wife, Susan, his two daughters, Hilary and Heidi, and one granddaughter.

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## **Scope and Content**

This life oral history interview with Norm Van Lier was conducted by Larry Crowe on November 4, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Basketball player Norm Van Lier (1947 - 2009 ) played for the Chicago Bulls and the the Cincinnati Royals. Van Lier led the NBA in assists his rookie year, making the NBA All-Defensive Team his second year. He appeared in three NBA All-Star games, was named to the NBA All-Defensive First Team three times and the NBA All-Defensive Second Team five times. Upon retirement, Van Lier became an analyst for Comcast Sports Net and Fox Sports Net.

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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:**

Van Lier, Norm, 1947-2009

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### **Subjects:**

African Americans--Interviews

Van Lier, Norm, 1947-2009--Interviews

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African American basketball players--Interviews

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African American television personalities-Illinois--Chicago--Interviews

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African American families--Pennsylvania

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Midland (Beaver County, Pa.)--Social life and customs

---

Race awareness--United States

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Saint Francis College (Loretto, Pa.)

---

King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968--Assassination

---

Death--Psychological aspects

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National Basketball Association

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Professional athletes--Drug use--United States

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Basketball players--Recruiting--United States

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Basketball players--Selection and appointment

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Basketball draft

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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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Chicago Bulls (Basketball team)

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## **Occupations:**

Basketball Player

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

SportsMakers

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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 Norm Van Lier, November 4, 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 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).

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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 Norm Van Lier, Section  
A2003\_260\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:30 2003/11/04

Norm Van Lier talks about his parents' backgrounds, their personalities, and the values instilled in him by his parents and grandmother. He then details his childhood growing up in Midland, Pennsylvania, and the area's long-standing tradition of sports, namely football.

African American basketball players--Interviews.

African American television personalities--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews.

African American families--Pennsylvania.

Midland (Beaver County, Pa.)--Social life and customs.

Race awareness--United States.

Saint Francis College (Loretto, Pa.).

King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968--Assassination.

Death--Psychological aspects.

National Basketball Association.

Professional athletes--Drug use--United States.

Basketball players--Recruiting--United States.

Basketball players--Selection and appointment.

Basketball draft.

Video Oral History Interview with Norm Van Lier, Section  
A2003\_260\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:45 2003/11/04

Norm Van Lier recalls the popularity of sports in Midland, Pennsylvania and shares stories about his participation in various sports during high school. He then talks about the teachers and coaches who mentored him in school. Van Lier discusses his growing racial awareness during his youth in the 1960s. Lastly, Van Lier details his decision to attend Saint Francis College, a small school in Pennsylvania, rather than attending a large sports-oriented university.

Video Oral History Interview with Norm Van Lier, Section  
A2003\_260\_001\_003, TRT: 0:30:00 2003/11/04

Norm Van Lier describes the environment in and around Saint Francis College in Loretto, Pennsylvania. He then shares his remembrances of the day Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated, and expresses his anger over continuing racial disparity in today's society. He then painfully recalls the death of a close friend. Van Lier then talks about his continued participation in sports during college and his subsequent draft into the National Basketball Association. Lastly, he discusses his years with the Chicago Bulls and assesses his performance on the court.

Video Oral History Interview with Norm Van Lier, Section  
A2003\_260\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:30 2003/11/04

Norm Van Lier discusses his eleven years with the Chicago Bulls basketball team, his personal successes, and comments on the importance of good coaching. He then comments on drug use in professional sports, and details his becoming addicted to pain killers after playing with injuries for many years. Van Lier gives his opinions on the National Basketball Association recruiting teenagers to play professional basketball rather than having them complete college. Lastly he comments on the importance of family rather than sports in the black community, and his displeasure with the today's NBA draft.

Video Oral History Interview with Norm Van Lier, Section  
A2003\_260\_001\_005, TRT: 0:21:30 2003/11/04

Norm Van Lier recalls his difficulties in finding a job after his basketball career ended. He then talks about his current, multi-faceted career of being a sports analyst on television and radio, and speaking about sports and society on the public speaking circuit. Van Lier then comments about the NBA championships won by the Chicago Bulls. Lastly, he gives reflections on his life and career and details his future plans.