

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Paul J. King

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	King, Paul J., 1938-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Paul J. King,
Dates:	December 13, 2003 and May 17, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2003 and 2004
Physical Description:	10 Betacame SP videocassettes (4:41:17).
Abstract:	Contractor Paul J. King (1938 -) is the Chairman and CEO of UBM Construction, and also the chairman and founder of the O'Hare Development Group. King's written works have been published in Black Scholar, Emerge Magazine, and Black Enterprise, and he is a lecturer at Roosevelt University in African Studies. King was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 13, 2003 and May 17, 2004, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2003_297
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Contractor and CEO of UBM, Inc., Paul King was born September 6, 1938, in Chicago, Illinois. Raised in a business-minded family, King attended St. Anselm Elementary School. Graduating from Mayor Daley's alma mater, De La Salle High School, in 1956, King went on to the University of Chicago to study chemistry, the University of Illinois for construction management and pursued graduate studies in political science from Roosevelt University.

Working his way through college, King's part time paint contracting work exploded into a full time business. He then faced the reality that the city rarely awarded jobs to black contractors. Keenly aware that public contracts were necessary for growth, King began to organize with other black contractors. He became executive director of the United Builders Association of Chicago in 1969 and a national officer in the National Association of Minority Contractors. In association with the Builders Association of Chicago and The University of Illinois King developed two courses in construction management for minority contractors. He spearheaded two national meetings that involved hundreds of contractors and a working alliance with Congressman Parren Mitchell. As a faculty member of Advanced Management Research-International, King lectures on affirmative action issues. He has also been a contract compliance officer for the United States Department of Labor. Today, King is the Chairman and CEO of UBM Construction with over 100 employees and contracts worth up to a billion dollars. He is also chairman and founder of the O'Hare Development Group.

Traveling to twenty-four states and over forty cities to speak about the plight of minority contractors, King's economic and political views are published in *Black Scholar*, *Emerge Magazine*, and *Black Enterprise*. He is a lecturer at Roosevelt University in African Studies and contemporary black issues. King lives in Chicago with his wife, LoAnn.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Paul J. King was conducted by Larry Crowe on December 13, 2003 and May 17, 2004, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 10 Betacame SP videocassettes. Contractor Paul J. King (1938 -) is the Chairman and CEO of UBM Construction, and also the chairman and founder of the O'Hare Development Group. King's written works have been published in *Black Scholar*, *Emerge Magazine*, and *Black Enterprise*, and he is a lecturer at Roosevelt University in African Studies.

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:

King, Paul J., 1938-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
King, Paul J., 1938---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

Occupations:

Contractor

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 Paul J. King, December 13, 2003 and May 17, 2004. 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).

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 Paul J. King, Section
A2003_297_001_001, TRT: 0:29:30 2003/12/13

Paul King was born on September 6, 1938 in Chicago, Illinois. King's mother, Frances Lindsey King, was born in 1918 in Chicago. Her father worked as a chef on the railroad and her family owned a large farm in Cassopolis, Michigan. King's father, Paul King, Sr., was born in 1915 in New Orleans, Louisiana. King, Sr. moved to Chicago with his mother and twin sister; the family settled in the Washington Park neighborhood in a large two-flat where they later hosted other family members migrating north. King, Sr. served in the U.S. Army and started the first black-owned wholesale produce business in Chicago, supplying produce familiar to the African American community to supermarket chains. He was able to send his children to Catholic schools; King attended St. Anselm's School, where he played basketball, and De La Salle Institute. King was raised in his paternal family's two-flat. As a child, he was an avid baseball fan, playing baseball with his uncles and going to see the East-West All-Star Game with his father.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul J. King, Section
A2003_297_001_002, TRT: 0:28:15 2003/12/13

Paul King was raised on Chicago, Illinois' South Side near 63rd Street, where his neighbors included African American banker Jesse Binga and author Richard Wright. King's family encountered racial hostility as they moved south of 63rd and east of Cottage Grove Avenue in the 1950s. King attended a Catholic elementary school, St. Anselm's, whose nuns and priests were the only white people that he knew. King graduated at the top of his class, but was initially rejected when he applied to De La Salle Institute for high school. He was eventually accepted after a priest at St. Anselm's interceded on his behalf. At De La

Salle, where one of his classmates was future Chicago mayor Richard M. Daley, King was one of only twelve black students. He majored in chemistry and played basketball, but was kept off the varsity team due to racial discrimination. He graduated in 1957, and earned a basketball scholarship to the University of Chicago, where he tested out of the required freshman math and English courses.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul J. King, Section
A2003_297_001_003, TRT: 0:29:00 2003/12/13

Paul King, who was the first in his immediate family to attend college, majored in chemistry at the University of Chicago where he was taught by professors Harold Urey and Nathan Sugarman and played varsity basketball for Coach Joe Stampf. King joined the Theta chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity while in college and eventually became a chapter president and national officer. Through his fraternity, King was introduced to mentors, including Lewis A.H. Caldwell, Sidney A. Jones Jr., and HistoryMaker the Honorable John H. Stroger, Jr. He was also introduced to the Civil Rights Movement, taking inspiration from the leadership of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. and Thurgood Marshall. The Alpha commitment to social justice inspired King to work with men like HistoryMakers Jacob H. Carruthers Jr. and Harold Pates. After leaving college, King married HistoryMaker Loann Honesty King, began a contracting business and worked for DeSoto Chemical where he helped develop the first one-coat exterior latex house paint.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul J. King, Section
A2003_297_001_004, TRT: 0:30:40 2003/12/13

Paul King learned the painting and construction trades from his great-uncle. After making a \$500 profit as a contractor for a project in one of Oscar Brown, Sr.'s condo buildings, King started his own contracting company in the early 1960s, but continued to work for DeSoto Chemical through the 1970s. During the 1960s, King developed his intellectual understanding of the black experience through dialogues with HistoryMakers Harold Pates and Jacob H. Carruthers Jr. and other scholars at the Communiversity, and studying political science under St.

Clair Drake, C.L.R. James, and Charles V. Hamilton at Roosevelt University. In 1969, King partnered with other Chicago community leaders to protest discriminatory hiring practices in the construction industry. King's first published article, an essay on black business and black politics published in *Black Scholar* in 1972, resulted from the synthesis of his previous experiences. King reflects upon the loss of father figures in the African American community.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul J. King, Section
A2003_297_001_005, TRT: 0:28:50 2003/12/13

Paul King worked with businesses, community organizations, civil rights groups and gangs in an effort led by HistoryMaker C.T. Vivian to shut down a July 1969 construction project funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on Chicago's West Side which did not hire black contractors or laborers. In August of 1969, King was a founding member of the National Association of Minority Contractors. In 1970, HistoryMaker The Honorable Parren Mitchell, III read an article King wrote about collaboration between black elected officials and contractors, and invited him to join the Minority Business Enterprise Braintrust to advise the Black Caucus on laws which would benefit black contractors and businesses. King started his contracting firm, UBM Inc., in 1975. UBM has worked on projects such as Soldier Field, and is the largest black-owned contracting firm in Chicago. He recommends raising awareness of the contracting industry and strengthening trade schools to bring black youths into the profession.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul J. King, Section
A2003_297_002_006, TRT: 0:29:50 2004/05/17

In 1969, Paul King collaborated with community leaders in Chicago, Illinois, to shut down a \$60 million U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development project by invoking Executive Order 11246, which bans discriminatory hiring on government projects. In response, Mayor Richard J. Daley and the Chicago City Council agreed to The Chicago Plan which ensured minority subcontractors on federally funded projects and desegregated unions. King joined the National Association

of Minority Contractors in 1969 and after writing to HistoryMaker The Honorable Parren J. Mitchell, III, served on the Minority Business Enterprise Braintrust which successfully increased opportunities for minority subcontractors as part of a 1976 public works bill. King regrets that many of the beneficiaries of affirmative action victories are not African Americans. He reflects on his collaboration with gang leaders in the 1969 protests and advocates for providing paths to work in the contracting industry for former inmates.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul J. King, Section
A2003_297_002_007, TRT: 0:30:41 2004/05/17

Paul King worked with the National Association of Minority Contractors and HistoryMaker The Honorable Parren J. Mitchell, III to successfully lobby for establishment of the 8(a) Business Development Program, which designates some federal contracts to be set aside for minority-run firms. In 1983, King worked with Chicago, Illinois Mayor Harold Washington to enact a city ordinance mandating 25 percent of city contracts go to minorities. The program was later codified into law by Mayor Richard M. Daley, but then gutted in 2003 by a ruling of Judge John Moran. In the wake of challenges to affirmative action in the public sector, King sees a need to push for opportunities for minority contractors in the private sector. He observes an activism fatigue and is disappointed by the lack of urgency in younger generations. King is active in organizations to increase black participation in contracting, as a judge for the Newhouse Architectural Competition, a counselor at Malcolm X College and a member of Project Pride.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul J. King, Section
A2003_297_002_008, TRT: 0:30:10 2004/05/17

Paul King talks about Project Pride, an initiative to allow members of a community in which construction projects take place to work on those projects. King began writing essays in the late 1960s and over the past thirty years has published essays in newspapers and magazines such as the Chicago Tribune, N'DIGO, Emerge, and Motion. A highlight of his writing career was being invited to a symposium on African American thought held by

HistoryMaker Nathan Hare, where King presented an essay inspired by the book 'Imperium in Imperio,' by Sutton E. Griggs. King reflects on the decline of affirmative action due to the actions of the local and federal judiciary, and the controversies over affirmative action within the black community. He also explains his belief in lifelong learning and describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul J. King, Section
A2003_297_002_009, TRT: 0:30:30 2004/05/17

Paul King describes his friendship with and admiration for African American psychologist Dr. Bobby E. Wright, who coined the term "mentacide" to describe the mental consequences of slavery on African Americans. King finds the term useful in understanding why some members of the African American community lack motivation. King reflects upon his 1972 article "The Role of Black Business: Delirium or Imperium," and notes that many of the areas of concern for the African American community he outlined in the article continue to exist, including epidemics of HIV/AIDS and asthma, the breakdown of familial relationships and the lack of a strong black political agenda. King describes the influence that the book 'Imperium in Imperio' by Sutton E. Griggs had on him; reflects upon his legacy; considers what he would have done differently and describes how he would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Paul J. King, Section
A2003_297_002_010, TRT: 0:13:51 2004/05/17

This tape is not published to THMDA.

Paul J. King displays his photographs.