

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Carl Davis

PERSON

Davis, Carl, 1934-2012

Alternative Names: Carl Davis;

Life Dates: September 19, 1934-August 9, 2012

Place of Birth: Chicago, Illinois, USA

Residence: Summerville, SC

Occupations: Music Producer

Biographical Note

Successful record producer Carl H. Davis was born September 19, 1934, in Chicago, Illinois, where his father was a postal worker. He attended McCosh Elementary School and Englewood High School. He later earned a GED in 1954 and an associate's degree from Cortez College of Business in 1957.

Davis began his radio career typing play-lists for popular Chicago disc jockey Al Benson on WGES Radio in 1955. He quickly earned a reputation as a

“hitpicker.” His success allowed him to join the marketing department of Arnold Distributors. In the early 1960s, Davis managed the Nat label and had a minor hit with “Nite Owl” by the DuKays. In 1962, he became a producer for Okeh Records. There, Davis discovered the legendary Gene Chandler and produced and co-wrote the “Duke of Earl” in 1962 and Major Lance’s “Monkey Time” in 1963. Through his work, Davis created a Chicago sound with upbeat arrangements backed by musicians and arrangers like Johnny Pate and Sonny Sanders. A partnership with Curtis Mayfield resulted in hits for Major Lance, Billy Butler (Jerry’s brother) and Walter Jackson. Meanwhile, Gene Chandler’s “Rainbow,” “Just Be True,” and “Man’s Temptation” were all hits. Davis produced the hit “Dear Lover” for Mary Wells and often hired Motown’s Funk Brothers band. Davis was then hired by Brunswick Records where he produced Jackie Wilson’s “Higher and Higher” and Barbara Acklyn’s “Love Makes A Woman.” After forming Atlantic’s Dakar Records, he produced the Chi-Lites and Tyrone Davis’ “Turn Back the Hands of Time” and “Can I Change My Mind.”

Davis had eight grandchildren, lived in Chicago and managed his own record label, Chi-Sound, until 2012.

Davis passed away on August 9, 2012.

Related Entries

Englewood High School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Emmett Louis Till Math & Science Academy

[STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

[STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Arnold Distributors [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1978 to ?]

1962

Okeh Records [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 2010 to ?]

Brunswick Records [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

Record Producer

WGES Radio [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1955 to ?]

NARAS [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Board Member

Brass Foundation [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

Board Member

DLHE-HA [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

President