

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Raymond Jackson

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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>	Jackson, Raymond
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Raymond Jackson,
<b>Dates:</b>	August 30, 2004
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2004
<b>Physical Description:</b>	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:57:53).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Music professor and pianist Raymond Jackson (1933 - ) is a graduate of the Julliard School of Music in New York and received a fellowship that allowed him to perform a series of debut piano recitals in Vienna, London, Stockholm, Geneva and Munich. Jackson serves as a professor of music at Howard University. Jackson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 30, 2004, in Silver Spring, Maryland. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2004_152
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Musical prodigy, concert pianist, and educator Raymond Thompson Jackson, Jr. was born on December 11, 1933 in Providence, Rhode Island. His mother and father were beauticians and ran a successful beauty business out of their Providence home. Many of the shampoos and oils used on clients were hand-made by his mother. Jackson's musical talent surfaced at an early age, and by the time he was six years old he could play the piano and read music. When he graduated from Hope High School in 1951, in addition to the piano, he played the bass, violin and organ. While at Hope he also was active in the orchestra, the band and the Young Artists Club. He was awarded the Hope Key for his many musical activities and achievements during high school.

From 1951 until 1955, Jackson attended the prestigious New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. He and fellow classmate, Coretta Scott King, were among a handful of African Americans who attended the Conservatory. Jackson earned a Bachelor's of Music degree in Piano Performance in 1955. In addition to graduating first in his class he was the recipient of the Conservatory's highest award, the "George Whitfield Chadwick Medal." In 1957, Jackson earned a Bachelor's of Science degree in Piano from the renowned Julliard School of Music in New York. He went on to receive his Masters of Science and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from Julliard in 1959 and 1973 respectively.

Jackson studied in France at the American Conservatory of Music from 1960 until 1961. After studying in France, he worked as an organist and choir director for several churches in New Jersey until 1973. In 1963, Jackson received a fellowship that allowed him to perform a series of debut piano recitals in Vienna, London, Stockholm, Geneva and Munich. He immediately captured the hearts and applause of European audiences.

In 1970, Jackson began teaching music at the collegiate level as an adjunct professor at The Mannes College of Music in New York City and Concordia College in Bronxville, NY. In 1977, Jackson was offered a faculty

position at Howard University, Washington, D.C., where he is a Full Professor and continues to teach piano and serve as Coordinator for student and faculty performances.

Jackson has been the recipient of numerous awards and has won top honors in national and international piano competitions. He was the first African American and musician to be inducted into the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Raymond Jackson was conducted by Racine Tucker Hamilton on August 30, 2004, in Silver Spring, Maryland, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Music professor and pianist Raymond Jackson (1933 - ) is a graduate of the Julliard School of Music in New York and received a fellowship that allowed him to perform a series of debut piano recitals in Vienna, London, Stockholm, Geneva and Munich. Jackson serves as a professor of music at Howard University.

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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:

Jackson, Raymond

Hamilton, Racine Tucker (Interviewer)

Lane, Edgar Carey (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Jackson, Raymond--Interviews

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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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## Occupations:

Pianist

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

MusicMakers

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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 Raymond Jackson, August 30, 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 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).

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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 Raymond Jackson, Section A2004\_152\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:45  
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Raymond Jackson was born December 11, 1933 in Providence, Rhode Island to Raymond Jackson, Sr. and Beulah Boyd Jackson. His mother was born on 1895 in Bracey, Virginia where she grew up on a farm. At age twelve, after her mother's death, she moved to Providence to find employment. Her passion for hair led to a career as a beautician. Jackson's father was born on October 27, 1902 in Worcester, Massachusetts, the son of laborer Frank Jackson. He was a mechanic, but later attended beauty school. Together, Raymond Sr. and Beulah ran a successful beauty salon from their house. Jackson describes the sights and smells of childhood and recalls his earliest memories. He describes Providence as a community where everyone knew and supported each other and where race relations were normal. Jackson started piano lessons at a young age and was a very dedicated pupil. He attended the integrated Doyle Avenue Elementary School in Providence and had one younger sister, Addie Mae Jackson who was disabled.

Video Oral History Interview with Raymond Jackson, Section A2004\_152\_001\_002, TRT: 0:31:10  
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Raymond Jackson recounts his formal music education and early career. He attended Nathan Bishop Junior High School and Hope High School in Providence, Rhode Island, while studying organ at the Providence Bible Institute and piano at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, Massachusetts. After graduating from high school in 1951, Jackson attended the New England Conservatory of Music, where there were three African Americans out of eighty students, including Coretta Scott King. He graduated Summa Cum Laude in 1955 with his B.M. degree. He then pursued his M.S. degree at the Julliard School in New York City, where Broadway singer Josephine Heathman introduced him to the National Association of Negro Musicians. Upon graduating from Julliard in 1959, he received funding from the Howard Foundation to study at the American Music Conservatory in Fontainebleau, France, where he received wide acceptance as a black musician. Returning to the U.S. in 1961, he became a church organist in Tenafly, New Jersey.

Video Oral History Interview with Raymond Jackson, Section A2004\_152\_001\_003, TRT: 0:27:55  
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Raymond Jackson recalls touring Europe as an African American musician in 1963. There, he was adored by fans sympathetic to the plight of African Americans and saw historical instruments, connecting each piano's physicality to the music of its period. Jackson reflects on his performance at the 1965 Marguerite Long Piano Competition, which he considers the best of his career. In 1970, Jackson began teaching at Mannes College of Music in New York City. He was then offered a teaching position at Howard University in Washington, D.C. in 1975, which he accepted two years later, realizing the position could help him reach wider audiences. Jackson recalls the cultural shift he has witnessed among students throughout his teaching career, observing that they are now more interested in achieving a professional music career than in developing technical skills. He also describes his mission to educate African American audiences about classical music and describes his routine when preparing for a successful recital.

Video Oral History Interview with Raymond Jackson, Section A2004\_152\_001\_004, TRT: 0:28:03  
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Raymond Jackson reflects upon his life and legacy. He talks about the importance of training, practice, and theory to music, and he attributes his

success to a focus on expressing himself rather than impressing others, to a rigorous technical education, and to intensive practice. He believes musical education in schools increases students' intellectual capacities and reduces youth violence. Jackson describes the women who have impacted his life and career, including his mother, his first two piano teachers, and Broadway singer Josephine Baker. He also describes his plans to publish and raise awareness of the works of African American composers, and regrets that he did not study the technical aspects of music earlier. He reflects upon his legacy and how he would like to be remembered, provides advice for aspiring musicians, and describes what he likes about the piano and the organ. He concludes by narrating his photographs.