

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Phillip L. Clay

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Clay, Phillip L.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Phillip L. Clay,
Dates:	October 13, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:12:46).
Abstract:	Academic administrator Phillip L. Clay (1946 -) was the first African American Chancellor of MIT, where he was also a professor of urban planning. Clay is recognized as a national authority on urban housing policy and community-based organizational development, and is a founding member of the National Housing Trust, which addressed the issue of housing preservation in urban areas. Clay was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 13, 2004, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_201
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

When Phillip L. Clay, Ph.D., was appointed as the chancellor of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on July 1, 2001, he became the highest-ranking African American official in the Institute's 136-year history. As chancellor, Clay has oversight responsibility for undergraduate and graduate education, student life and services, research policy, strategic planning, campus development, international initiatives and the management of MIT's large-scale institutional partnerships.

Born on May 17, 1946, Clay grew up in Wilmington, North Carolina and graduated with honors from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill in 1968. In 1975, he received a Ph.D. in city planning from MIT. Upon graduating from MIT, he was appointed immediately as an assistant professor in MIT's Department of Urban Studies and Planning. He rose through the ranks, first becoming associate professor and then becoming a full professor in 1992. Between 1980 and 1984, Clay also served as the assistant director of the Joint Center for Urban Studies of MIT and Harvard University.

Clay is recognized as a national authority on urban housing policy and community-based organizational development. He has been the principal investigator in several studies examining affordable housing, housing preservation and urban gentrification. For example, in a 1987 study commissioned by the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, he identified the market and institutional conditions contributing to the erosion of low-income rental housing and documented the need for a national preservation policy. He later served on the national commission that recommended the policy that became part of the Housing Act of 1990. In research sponsored by several national foundations, Clay has evaluated the effectiveness of various initiatives to build organizational and developmental capacity in community-based development entities.

Clay is also a founding member of the National Housing Trust, which addressed the issue of housing preservation in urban areas. At the time of the interview, he the vice-president of the board of The Community Builders, one of the country's largest non-profit producers of affordable housing.

Clay and his wife, Cassandra, live in Boston, and have a daughter, Elizabeth.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Phillip L. Clay was conducted by Robert Hayden on October 13, 2004, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Academic administrator Phillip L. Clay (1946 -) was the first African American Chancellor of MIT, where he was also a professor of urban planning. Clay is recognized as a national authority on urban housing policy and community-based organizational development, and is a founding member of the National Housing Trust, which addressed the issue of housing preservation in urban areas.

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:

Clay, Phillip L.

Hayden, Robert (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Clay, Phillip L.--Interviews

Massachusetts Institute of Technology--Faculty--Interviews

City planners--United States--Interviews

African American families--North Carolina--Wilmington

Wilmington (N.C.)--Social Conditions

Education--North Carolina--Wilmington

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Civil rights movement--North Carolina

Vietnam War, 1961-1975

United States--Armed Forces--African Americans

Joint Center for Housing Studies of MIT and Harvard University

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Occupations:

Chancellor

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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 Phillip L. Clay, October 13, 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).

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 Phillip L. Clay, Section A2004_201_001_001, TRT: 0:28:00 ?

Educator and city planner Phillip L. Clay begins by recalling his family background, describing his mother, his maternal grandparents, and his siblings. Clay details his early childhood in Wilmington, North Carolina, recalling his family life, describing the town, and explaining the role of the church. Clay also names influential figures from his childhood, including his grandmother and uncle.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology--Faculty--Interviews.

City planners--United States--Interviews.

African American families--North Carolina--Wilmington.

Wilmington (N.C.)--Social conditions.

Education--North Carolina--Wilmington.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Civil rights movements--North Carolina.

Vietnam War, 1961-1975.

United States--Armed Forces--African Americans.

Joint Center for Housing Studies of MIT and Harvard University.

Video Oral History Interview with Phillip L. Clay, Section A2004_201_001_002, TRT: 0:29:01 ?

Phillip L. Clay recounts his school life in Wilmington, North Carolina. He uses his elementary and high school years to illustrate the intersection of race, education, and politics during the 1950s, particularly in regard to integration. Clay then explains his decision to attend college and shares his experiences as an undergraduate at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he became politically active and invested in the Civil Rights Movement during the

1960s.

Video Oral History Interview with Phillip L. Clay, Section A2004_201_001_003, TRT: 0:29:20 ?

Phillip L. Clay recalls his student activism at the University of North at Chapel Hill, including his involvement in the Civil Rights Movement and his efforts to desegregate schools. Clay then recounts the experience of having his graduate education interrupted by the military draft and having to serve a fifteen-month tour of duty in Vietnam. Clay then resumed his studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and tells of earning a Ph.D. in city planning and starting a family. Clay then discusses his transition into becoming a professor at M.I.T., naming other professors who influenced him.

Video Oral History Interview with Phillip L. Clay, Section A2004_201_001_004, TRT: 0:29:59 ?

Phillip L. Clay discusses his career at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He details his work on the faculty, talking about successful students and discussing his appointment to the Joint Center for Urban Studies. Clay then discusses his role as chancellor of M.I.T., a post he has held since 2001. Clay explains how he has worked to improve student life at M.I.T. and describes his involvement in several housing and urban affairs organizations. He concludes by reflecting on his life and career.

Video Oral History Interview with Phillip L. Clay, Section A2004_201_001_005, TRT: 0:16:26 ?

Phillip L. Clay shares his hopes and concerns for the future of the black community and evaluates the challenges facing young black people today.