

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Monte Ford

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Ford, Monte, 1959-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Monte Ford,
Dates:	October 29, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:42:49).
Abstract:	Corporate executive Monte Ford (1959 -) is the senior vice president and chief information officer of information technology for American Airlines, Inc. Ford was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 29, 2004, in Dallas, Texas. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_221
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Senior vice president and chief information officer of information technology for American Airlines, Inc., Monte Ford, was born October 3, 1959, in Washington, D.C.; his mother Charity Hunt's Georgia ancestors were written about in a book entitled *Ambiguous Lives*. Ford's father, Nathaniel Ford, was from Waycross, Georgia. Growing up in Southeast D.C.'s Stronghold neighborhood, Ford was inspired by his older brother who attended Wilberforce University; finishing Jackson Elementary School, he attended Augustus Paul Junior High School, Linton Hall Military School and graduated from co-educational Perkiomen School in Pennsburg, Pennsylvania, in 1977. Ford earned his B.S. degree in Business Administration from Northeastern University in Boston in 1982 where he met his future wife.

Ford worked for Digital Equipment Corporation as a marketing representative and in other positions from 1982 to 1990, while occasionally working as a disc jockey. From 1990 to 1994, Ford worked for the Bank of Boston, becoming senior vice president for technology. At the Associates First Capital Corporation, Ford served as the executive vice president and CIO from 1997 to 2000, when he was named senior vice president and CIO. In 2001, Ford became the chief information officer and senior vice president of information technology for American Airlines, Inc., which is a subsidiary of AMR Corporation; in this context, he was in charge of the information technology services group. From 2006 to 2008, Ford also served as the director of Moneygram International Inc.

Action oriented, Ford promoted the concept "Well done is better than well said;" his articles, *True Colors* and *Be A King, Not A Joker*, remain widely read in CIO circles. Active in youth programs, church leadership groups, and the Children's Medical Center, Ford maintained a long history of community service for which he received numerous awards. Ford and his wife raised three children, settling in Southlake, Texas.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Monte Ford was conducted by Larry Crowe on October 29, 2004, in Dallas, Texas, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Corporate executive Monte Ford (1959 -) is the senior vice president and chief information officer of information technology for American Airlines, Inc.

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:

Ford, Monte, 1959-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Ford, Monte, 1959---Interviews

African American businesspeople--Interviews

African American executives--Interviews

Minorities in technology--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

American Airlines, Inc.

Occupations:

Corporate Executive

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 Monte Ford, October 29, 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 Monte Ford, Section A2004_221_001_001, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

Monte Ford was born on October 3, 1959 in Washington, D.C. His mother, Charity Hunt, was born in 1928. Ford traces his maternal family to Hancock

County, Georgia, which he visited during the summers as a child. He remembers stories he heard from his maternal relatives. One of his maternal cousins is HistoryMaker The Honorable Edith Ingram, a judge in Hancock County, and his maternal grandmother lived with his family in D.C. His mother migrated to D.C. where she became a beautician and bought a house. Ford's father, Nathaniel Ford, was born in Waycross, Georgia. Ford's paternal grandfather, Elzie, helped African Americans escape the Jim Crow South. Ford was raised in northeast D.C. He remembers the sounds of North Capital Street and playing football in the alleys. He has two older brothers who were a strong influence on his life. Ford took the bus across town to attend Fillmore School and Jackson School in Georgetown. Then, he entered Augustus Paul Junior High School. He attended Florida Avenue Baptist Church.

African American businesspeople--Interviews.

African American executives--Interviews.

Minorities in technology--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Monte Ford, Section A2004_221_001_002, TRT: 0:29:40 ?

Monte Ford's parents sent him to Linton Hall Military School in Bristow, Virginia for the eighth grade after he started to lose his academic focus. He recalls how his mother tricked him into taking the admissions test. He attended an all-boys boarding school for ninth grade, then transferred to the co-ed Perkiomen School in Pennsburg, Pennsylvania. There, he played football, interacted with students from across the East Coast and was mentored by his favorite teacher. . He decided to attend Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts to take advantage of their co-op program, which allowed him to gain work experience. He worked at Digital Equipment Corporation, Gillette, Prime Computer and IBM while an undergraduate. He majored in marketing and pledged Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity. He also met his wife, who he courted for nine months before she agreed to date him. Upon graduating in 1982, he accepted a position in the marketing department of Digital Equipment Corporation in Maynard, Massachusetts.

Video Oral History Interview with Monte Ford, Section A2004_221_001_003, TRT: 0:29:38 ?

Monte Ford accepted a position in Digital Equipment Corporation's marketing department upon graduating from Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts in 1982. In 1990, he was hired by one of his clients, the Bank of Boston, as senior vice president of technology. In 1994, he moved to Dallas, Texas after being hired as chief information officer (CIO) for Associates First Capital Corporation. In 2000, he became the CIO of American Airlines, just as the company was acquiring Trans World Airline (TWA). Ford describes the actions of the executive team on the day of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, in which two American Airlines planes were involved. Following 9/11, American has worked to rebuild public confidence in the airline. Ford writes a column on leadership in CIO Magazine. He reflects upon his experience being an African American executive in corporate America and recalls a time when he overreacted to a colleague's comment. Ford talks about his mentors and his three children.

Video Oral History Interview with Monte Ford, Section A2004_221_001_004, TRT: 0:14:01 ?

Monte Ford recounts his hiring at the Bank of Boston to illustrate one of his favorite quotes, "Well done is always better than well said." He believes that how a manager feels about the success of a project is often more important than how a project performs on more objective metrics. Ford talks about his future career plans, and describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community and how he would like to be remembered. He reflects upon his life,

his parents' pride in his career and his legacy.