

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Steven A. Minter

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Minter, Steven A., 1938-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Steven A. Minter,
Dates:	January 11, 2005
Bulk Dates:	2005
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:20:20).
Abstract:	Foundation executive Steven A. Minter (1938 - 2019) served as president and executive director of the Cleveland Foundation, the nation's first community foundation and the second largest in the nation. Minter was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 11, 2005, in Cleveland, Ohio. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2005_007
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

University executive-in-residence and former foundation executive Steven A. Minter was born in Akron, Ohio on October 23, 1938. He is the son of Lawrence and Dorothy Minter. Graduating from Ohio's Kinsman High School in 1956, Minter earned his B.A. degree in education from Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea, Ohio in 1960. In 1963, he earned his M.Ed. degree from Case Western Reserve University. He also holds honorary doctorate degrees from Case Western Reserve University, Baldwin-Wallace College, Kent State University, Oberlin College, Lake Erie College and Findlay College.

Minter served as president and executive director of the Cleveland Foundation from 1984 until his retirement in July 2003. Outside the foundation world, Minter spent over 15 years in governmental positions. In 1980, when the U.S. Department of Education was first formed, he served as its first under secretary. From 1970 to 1975, he was the commissioner of public welfare for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. He had a career as a caseworker at the Cuyahoga County Welfare Department in 1960 in Cleveland, Ohio and became its director in 1969.

Minter served on the boards of numerous national and regional organizations, including the College of Wooster, Community Foundations of America, American Public Welfare Association and the National Community AIDS Partnership. He co-chaired Greater Cleveland's Vision Council and served on the boards of the Greater Cleveland Roundtable, Northeast Ohio Council on Higher Education, the Union Club and Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors. He is a director of KeyCorp and the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company. He is also a former board member of Dominion Resources, Rubbermaid and Ohio Bell Telephone Company.

Minter is the recipient of numerous awards and honors, including the 2003 Distinguished Grantmaker Award presented by the Council on Foundations and the 1991 Ohio Governor's Award for Excellence in Education.

Minter and his wife, Dolly, live in Shaker Heights, Ohio. They have three married daughters, two grandsons and one granddaughter.

Minter passed away on September 19, 2019.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Steven A. Minter was conducted by Regennia Williams on January 11, 2005, in Cleveland, Ohio, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Foundation executive Steven A. Minter (1938 - 2019) served as president and executive director of the Cleveland Foundation, the nation's first community foundation and the second largest in the nation.

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:

Minter, Steven A., 1938-

Williams, Regennia (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Minter, Steven A., 1938---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Cleveland Foundation

Occupations:

Foundation Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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 Steven A. Minter, January 11, 2005. 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 Steven A. Minter, Section A2005_007_001_001, TRT: 0:28:50 ?
Steven A. Minter was born on October 23, 1938 in Akron, Ohio. His mother,

Dorothy Minter, was born in New Orleans, Louisiana and raised by an aunt, Margaret Washington Henderson Knox, in Kent, Ohio. Minter refers to Knox as his maternal grandmother. She worked as a domestic and was a great influence on Minter's life. His father, Lawrence Minter, was born in 1916 in Buena Vista, Georgia and moved to Ohio as a child. Minter's paternal grandfather, Samuel Minter, worked at Firestone Tire and Rubber Company most of his life and his paternal grandmother, Mozell Minter, was a homemaker. Minter recalls his paternal grandfather's talent for storytelling. Minter's family, which included eight children, moved around Northeast Ohio throughout Minter's childhood. Lawrence Minter worked in a number of trades, and Dorothy Minter worked as a homemaker, was active in the community and attended college later in life. Minter describes how both parents took an interest in their children's education.

Video Oral History Interview with Steven A. Minter, Section A2005_007_001_002, TRT: 0:29:10 ?

Steven A. Minter was raised in the rural communities of Northeast Ohio. He recalls working on farms in high school and describes the sights, sounds and smells of his childhood. His earliest childhood memories are of being one of the top readers in a summer reading program at a local library in first grade and of being identified as a "smart child" after scoring well on an exam in fifth grade. Minter was raised in predominantly white communities and remembers when his family was forced to move out of their house in Braceville, Ohio by the Klu Klux Klan. He also remembers being discriminated against in restaurants and hotels while travelling with his high school band. Minter attended Kinsman High School in Kinsman, Ohio, where his family was the only African American family in the town. He describes navigating an all-white school environment, playing on the school baseball team, and his high school teachers and mentors as well as celebrating holidays with his family and the influence of the Methodist Church.

Video Oral History Interview with Steven A. Minter, Section A2005_007_001_003, TRT: 0:29:40 ?

Encouraged by his mentors Robert Titus and Jean Garlock to attend college, Steven A. Minter, in 1956, enrolled in Baldwin Wallace University in Berea, Ohio where he joined the Beta Sigma Tau Fraternity. Beta Sigma Tau Fraternity was one of the first interracial fraternities and its founders included HistoryMaker Stanley Tolliver. Minter's role models in college included HistoryMaker George Forbes and C. Lyonel Jones. Minter met Dolores "Dolly" Kreicher, a white woman in the education department, and they married in April 1961. Minter was unable to secure a job as a physical education teacher in the Cleveland Public School system due to discrimination, and so he began his career as a caseworker for the Cuyahoga County Welfare Department in Cleveland, Ohio. Minter was promoted to director of the department in 1969. In 1970, Minter accepted the position as Commissioner of Public Welfare for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Video Oral History Interview with Steven A. Minter, Section A2005_007_001_004, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Steven A. Minter recalls meeting Cardinal Richard James Cushing soon after being appointed Massachusetts Commissioner of Public Welfare. While Commissioner, Minter developed a professional network that included Senator James Kelly, Congressman Joseph Early, [HM] Marian Wright Edelman, and future President Jimmy Carter. In 1975, he returned to Ohio to join The Cleveland Foundation, and under the Carter administration, he served as the first Under Secretary of Education. Minter describes the professional accomplishments of his three daughters who were all Yale or Harvard graduates as well as the philanthropic philosophy of The Cleveland Foundation. As President and Executive Director of the Foundation, he sought to increase

minority charitable giving in order to further fulfill the foundation's mission as a community foundation.

Video Oral History Interview with Steven A. Minter, Section A2005_007_001_005, TRT: 0:22:40 ?

Steven A. Minter worked on neighborhood, housing, and public education initiatives while serving as Executive Director and President of the Cleveland Foundation. Two of the Foundation's African American donors included HistoryMaker Judge Lillian Burke, the first African American to serve as judge and Dr. Kenneth Clement, who served as an important advisor Mayor Carl Stokes. He described the roles of Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller and Bill Gates, Jr. to American philanthropy. After retiring from The Cleveland Foundation in 2003, Minter joined the Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University in Cleveland, Ohio as a fellow where the conference center was named in honor of them. He and his wife, Delores "Dolly" Minter, established a Cleveland Foundation donor advised fund. Minter described the educational disparities and the disinvestment in education in Ohio, from the elementary level to the state's colleges and universities. Minter also talks about his greatest accomplishments.