

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Herbert Paul Douglas, Jr.

Overview of the Collection

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| Repository: | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com |
| Creator: | Douglas, Herbert Paul, 1922- |
| Title: | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Herbert Paul Douglas, Jr., |
| Dates: | February 7, 2005 |
| Bulk Dates: | 2005 |
| Physical Description: | 5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:17:19). |
| Abstract: | Marketing consultant and track and field athlete Herbert Paul Douglas, Jr. (1922 - 2023) was the former national special markets manager for Pabst Brewing Company and also worked as vice president of urban market development for Schieffelin and Somerset Co., where he helped popularize Hennessy cognac in the African American community. Douglas was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 7, 2005, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| Identification: | A2005_039 |
| Language: | The interview and records are in English. |

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Herbert Paul Douglas, Jr., sales executive and Olympic medalist, was born March 9, 1922 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His father owned an automobile repair shop and was reported in *Ebony* magazine as the first blind African American to use a seeing eye dog. Douglas attended Gladstone Elementary School and Gladstone Junior High School. As a teenager, he idolized Jesse Owens' performance in the 1936 Olympics. He was playing football and running track when he graduated from Allderdice High School. Attending the University of Pittsburgh, Douglas won three collegiate titles in the long jump. He earned his B.S. degree from the University of Pittsburgh in 1948. That same year, Douglas won the Bronze Medal for a 24 foot 8.75 inch long jump in the London Summer Olympics. Returning to the University of Pittsburgh, Douglas completed his M.Ed. degree in 1950.

Douglas worked as night manager for his father's auto business until the Pabst Brewing Company hired him in 1950. At Pabst, he rose from sales representative to southern district manager. Douglas served as Pabst's national special markets manager from 1965 to 1968. From 1977 to 1980, he worked as vice president of urban market development for Schieffelin and Somerset Co., where he helped popularize Hennessy Congac X.O, V.S.O.P, V.S and other brands in the African American community. Douglas began working as an urban marketing consultant in 1987.

In 1980, Douglas founded the International Amateur Athletic Association, Inc. (IAAA), of which he was president. He also served on the board of directors of the Jesse Owens Foundation and the University of Pittsburgh. Douglas, a member of the NAACP and Urban League, was inducted into the Pennsylvania Sports Hall of Fame in 1992. Semi-retired, he lived with his wife in Philadelphia. He was selected by *Ebony* magazine as one of the 100 Most Successful Black Men.

Herbert Paul Douglas, Jr. passed away on April 22, 2023 at the age of 101.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Herbert Paul Douglas, Jr. was conducted by Larry Crowe on February 7, 2005, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Marketing consultant and track and field athlete Herbert Paul Douglas, Jr. (1922 - 2023) was the former national special markets manager for Pabst Brewing Company and also worked as vice president of urban market development for Schieffelin and Somerset Co., where he helped popularize Hennessy cognac in the African American community.

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:

Douglas, Herbert Paul, 1922-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Douglas, Herbert Paul, 1922---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Track and Field Athlete

HistoryMakers® Category:

SportsMakers

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 Herbert Paul Douglas, Jr., February 7, 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 Herbert Paul Douglas, Jr., Section A2005_039_001_001, TRT: 0:28:18 ?

Herbert Paul Douglas, Jr. was born on March 9, 1922 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His mother, Ilessa France Douglas, was born in 1900 in Pittsburgh, where she completed high school. Her ancestors were free blacks around Mount Airy, North Carolina, who immigrated to Pittsburgh in the late 1800s due to their poorly performing tobacco farm. Ilessa Douglas's parents

bought a house in Pittsburgh's Hazelwood neighborhood, which stayed in the family for generations. Douglas's father, Herbert Douglas, Sr., was born in Terra Haute, Indiana, worked in a coal mine in Brazil, Indiana, and then moved to Pittsburgh to be a caretaker for the cars of the city's upper class. Douglas, Sr. lost his sight due to a stroke in 1927, but he kept his car service going and was the first African American to use seeing eye dogs. Douglas lived with his parents, maternal grandmother and sister Ilessa, worked for his father's business, and played with the sons of first-generation European immigrants who worked at the nearby steel mills.

Video Oral History Interview with Herbert Paul Douglas, Jr., Section A2005_039_001_002, TRT: 0:30:11 ?

Herbert Paul Douglas, Jr. attended Gladstone Elementary School, Gladstone Junior High School, and Allerdice High School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he was consistently the city champion in sprints and the long jump. Douglas met Jesse Owens in 1936, whom he idolized for his many record-breaking performances. He attended Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans to run track under the coaching of Ralph Metcalfe, and was on the winning team for the Championships of America 440-yard relay. During World War II, Douglas was deferred from military service to help his blind father run his business. In 1945, Douglas matriculated at the University of Pittsburgh, where he majored in physical education and was a wide receiver on the football team. He qualified for the 1948 Summer Olympics in London, England where he won a bronze medal in the long jump. Douglas and his teammates hoped to blaze a trail for further integration in sports. After graduating from Pitt in 1949, he got a sales job at Pabst Brewing Co.

Video Oral History Interview with Herbert Paul Douglas, Jr., Section A2005_039_001_003, TRT: 0:28:41 ?

Herbert Paul Douglas, Jr. was hired as a salesman for Pabst Brewing Company while the company was under pressure to hire more African Americans. On a sales trip in Jackson, Mississippi, Medgar Evers showed Douglas around the African American community. In 1962, he joined Schieffelin and Somerset Co., where he was promoted to vice president of special markets in 1968, and sold brands such as Hennessy and Moet to the black community. Douglas hired Jesse Owens to do promotions for Schieffelin, and helped to produce 'The Black Athlete,' a 1971 film to raise awareness of great African American athletes. Schieffelin was criticized by activists like HistoryMaker Reverend Dr. Calvin O. Butts for placing liquor advertisements near churches and schools. Douglas recalls a conversation with HistoryMaker Louis Cameron Gossett, Jr. about the lack of visibility for black actors in Hollywood, and criticizes the commercialization of professional sports that seems to have led to fewer black coaches and players in some leagues.

Video Oral History Interview with Herbert Paul Douglas, Jr., Section A2005_039_001_004, TRT: 0:29:48 ?

Herbert Paul Douglas, Jr. worked at Schieffelin and Somerset Co. from 1962 to 1993. During his time there, he marketed luxury brands, such as Hennessy and Dom Perignon, to the black community. Douglas was relatively comfortable dealing with wealthy business tycoons like the Schieffelin family due to his contact with wealthy clients at his father's garage. He founded the International Amateur Athletic Association (IAAA), which awards the Jesse Owens International Trophy to the top amateur athlete; award recipients included Eric Heiden and Carl Lewis. Douglas's career put him in contact with Paul Robeson, whose son competed alongside Douglas in track meets during the 1940s, and

Nelson Mandela, who received an award from the IAAA. As a board member for the University of Pittsburgh, Douglas has served on affirmative action committees. He reflects upon his life and legacy. Douglas describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community, his plans for the future and talks about 2012 Summer Olympics.

Video Oral History Interview with Herbert Paul Douglas, Jr., Section A2005_039_001_005, TRT: 0:20:21 ?

Herbert Paul Douglas, Jr. narrates his photographs.