

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Darwin N. Davis, Sr.

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Davis, Darwin Nathaniel, 1932-2006
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Darwin N. Davis, Sr.,
Dates:	February 16, 2005
Bulk Dates:	2005
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:57:05).
Abstract:	Insurance executive Darwin N. Davis, Sr. (1932 - 2006) was one of the black salesmen Equitable Life Insurance hired in the wake of the 1964 Detroit race riot. Davis quickly rose from his entry level position to become the company's first African American regional president. Davis was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 16, 2005, in Stamford, Connecticut. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2005_050
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Darwin Nathaniel Davis, retired senior vice president of AXA Financial (formerly Equitable Life Insurance), was born on April 10, 1932, in Flint, Michigan; his maternal grandfather managed General Motors Executive Garage, and his father, Abner Davis, became the first black postal clerk in Flint. After attending Clark Elementary School, Whittier Junior High School, and Flint Central High School, Davis played football at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (formerly Arkansas A&M University) where he earned his B.A. degree in business

administration in 1954.

Snubbed by General Motors because of his race, Davis served in the United States Army from 1955 to 1957, tracking missiles at White Sands, New Mexico. Returning to college, Davis earned his M.Ed. degree from Wayne State University in Detroit, and then worked as a mathematics teacher at Duffield Elementary School and Jones Elementary School. One of the black salesmen Equitable Life Insurance hired in the wake of 1964's Detroit race riot, Davis became a district manager by his third year. Between 1971 and 1974, Davis earned every type of managerial award Equitable offered. Promoted to vice president of manpower development in 1974, Davis served as the company's first African American regional president in 1975. In 1989, Davis was promoted to senior vice president of Equitable Life Assurance Society and recognized by Black Enterprise magazine as one of the 25 most important African American executives. A mentor to many young African American executives, Davis retired as senior vice president of AXA Financial in 1998.

Davis served on the African American advisory board of Pepsi-Cola and the boards of the Albert Oliver Program, the Jackie Robinson Foundation, the Executive Leadership Foundation, the National Minority Golf Foundation, and the Jesse Owens Foundation. Davis also served as vice president of the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding. Davis, a recipient of many awards and honorary degrees, had four grown children and lived with his wife, Velmarie, in Stamford, Connecticut.

Davis passed away on Sunday, April 16, 2006 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Darwin N. Davis, Sr. was conducted by Larry Crowe on February 16, 2005, in Stamford, Connecticut, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Insurance executive Darwin N. Davis, Sr. (1932 - 2006) was one of the black salesmen Equitable Life Insurance hired in the wake of the 1964 Detroit race riot. Davis quickly rose from his entry level position to become the company's first African American regional president.

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:

Davis, Darwin Nathaniel, 1932-2006

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Davis, Darwin Nathaniel, 1932-2006--Interviews

African American businesspeople--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Equitable Life Insurance Company

Occupations:

Insurance 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 Darwin N. Davis, Sr., February 16, 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 2/5/2020 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 Darwin N. Davis, Sr., Section A2005_050_001_001, TRT: 0:31:23 2005/02/16

African American businesspeople--Interviews.

African American executives--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Darwin N. Davis, Sr., Section A2005_050_001_002, TRT: 0:27:30 2005/02/16

Video Oral History Interview with Darwin N. Davis, Sr., Section A2005_050_001_003, TRT: 0:26:50 2005/02/16

Video Oral History Interview with Darwin N. Davis, Sr., Section A2005_050_001_004, TRT: 0:31:22 2005/02/16