

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. Augustus A. White, III

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	White, Augustus A.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Augustus A. White, III,
Dates:	April 21, 2005
Bulk Dates:	2005
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:27:44).
Abstract:	Medical professor and orthopedic surgeon Dr. Augustus A. White, III (1936 -) was the first African American graduate of the Stanford University School of Medicine. White taught at Harvard Medical School as a professor of orthopedic surgery, in addition to serving as the chief of the orthopedic surgery department at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston, and the founder of the academic orthopedic program at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. White was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 21, 2005, in Weston, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2005_107
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Prominent orthopedic surgeon Dr. Augustus A. White III was born in Memphis, Tennessee, the son of a doctor and a librarian. After attending segregated schools in Memphis, White graduated from the private Mount Herman School in Northfield, Massachusetts, in 1953. White completed his pre-medical studies at Brown University in 1957, and in 1961 was the first African American graduate of

the Stanford University School of Medicine. Receiving his Ph.D. degree in orthopedic biomechanics at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden, White became the first African American surgical resident at the Yale-New Haven Hospital; he also served in Vietnam as a captain in the U.S. Army Medical Corps, earning a Bronze Star.

Specializing in care of the spine, White worked at Harvard Medical School as a professor of orthopedic surgery, and as the Ellen and Melvin Gordon Professor of Medical Education. For thirteen years, White served as chief of the orthopedic surgery department at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston; he also founded the academic orthopedic program at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

A noted author in his medical specialty, White co-wrote (with Dr. Manohar M. Panjabi) *Clinical Biomechanics of the Spine* and *Biomechanics of the Musculoskeletal System*. White also wrote *Your Aching Back: A Doctor's Guide to Relief*; *Back Care*; *Advances in Spinal Fusion: Molecular Science, Biomechanics and Clinical Management*; and *Clinical Biometrics of the Spine*, a standard reference book for orthopedists. In 2006, White was awarded the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons Diversity Award for his life's work, and his contributions to his field.

White met his wife, Anita, during his Ph.D. studies at the Karolinska Institute; the couple had three daughters.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dr. Augustus A. White, III was conducted by Robert Hayden on April 21, 2005, in Weston, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Medical professor and orthopedic surgeon Dr. Augustus A. White, III (1936 -) was the first African American graduate of the Stanford University School of Medicine. White taught at Harvard Medical School as a professor of orthopedic surgery, in addition to serving as the chief of the orthopedic surgery department at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston, and the founder of the academic orthopedic program at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

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:

White, Augustus A.

Hayden, Robert (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

White, Augustus A.--Interviews

African American surgeons--Interviews

Medical teaching personnel--Interviews

Orthopedists--Interviews

African American authors--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Harvard Medical School

Beth Israel Hospital (Boston, Mass.)

Occupations:

Medical Professor

Orthopedic Surgeon

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers|MedicalMakers

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 Dr. Augustus A. White, III, April 21, 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 Dr. Augustus A. White, III, Section A2005_107_001_001, TRT: 0:30:00 2005/04/22

Dr. Augustus A. White III was born on June 4, 1936 in Memphis, Tennessee to Vivian Dandridge White and Augustus White, Jr. His maternal grandfather, Sidney Dandridge, the illegitimate child of a white doctor and a mixed-race woman, left home at the age of fifteen because of abuse from his half-siblings, and later became a successful businessman. White's mother was born in Woodstock, Tennessee in 1912 as the youngest of thirteen children. All her sisters were teachers, and she skipped two grades in school. White's father was born in 1901 in Holly Springs, Mississippi. He attended Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee with Dr. William Montague Cobb and worked at Terrell Memorial Hospital

in Memphis. White and his family lived in an apartment in the hospital. He remembers adults asking him if he planned on becoming a doctor like his father. When he was eight years old, his father died. His mother, who had previously been a homemaker, began working as an English teacher and librarian.

African American surgeons--Interviews.

Medical teaching personnel--Interviews.

Orthopedists--Interviews.

African American authors--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Augustus A. White, III, Section A2005_107_001_002, TRT: 0:30:52 2005/04/22

Dr. Augustus A. White III attended Manassas High School in Memphis, Tennessee. He remembers his art teacher's mentoring and the school's strong focus on African American history. He also recalls Mary McLeod Bethune's lecture while visiting to the school, and seeing jazz legends like Hank Crawford perform. White was trained in boxing by his stepfather, who was a coach at another school. In ninth grade, he entered the exclusive Mount Hermon School for Boys in Gill, Massachusetts. Every student was required to work part time, and White eventually became a waiter in the faculty dining hall. He enjoyed his religious studies classes, singing in the choir at Mount Hermon and seeing Howard Thurman and James S. Robinson delivering sermons at the chapel. White was recognized for his achievements in football, wrestling and lacrosse. After graduating in 1953, he attended Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, where he was the first African American to pledge Delta Upsilon Fraternity, both on campus and nationally.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Augustus A. White, III, Section A2005_107_001_003, TRT: 0:30:14 2005/04/22

Dr. Augustus A. White III became the first African American president of a Delta Upsilon Fraternity chapter while at Brown University. The fraternity decided to cancel its national convention rather than allow White to attend, although thirty years later, he was awarded the fraternity's highest honor. White graduated in 1957 and spent the summer working as a scrub nurse at E.H. Crump

Hospital in Memphis, which inspired him to become a surgeon. He entered Stanford University School of Medicine, where he was mentored by Don King, Victor Richards and John Hanbury. While interning at the University of Michigan Medical Center, he learned from George Zitomer and David Kline. White returned to California for a general surgery residency. He then completed his orthopedic residency at Yale New Haven Hospital, where he was mentored by Wayne Southwick. During the Vietnam War, White joined the U.S. Army Medical Corps. He recalls working at a leper colony during his deployment and how his views on the war changed.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Augustus A. White, III, Section A2005_107_001_004, TRT: 0:29:07 2005/04/22

Dr. Augustus White III provided medical service for a leper colony while stationed in Vietnam with the U.S. Army Medical Corps. He was discharged in 1967, and was awarded a bronze star. After a year at Fort Ord Army Hospital in Monterey County, California, he won a fellowship to research orthopedic biomechanics under Dr. Carl Hirsch at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden. While there, he met his wife, Anita White, and they married in 1974. White returned to Yale University to start an orthopedic biomechanics laboratory. His book 'Clinical Biomechanics of the Spine' was published in 1978. White then served as chief of orthopedics for the first department of orthopedic surgery at Boston's Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center while also teaching at Harvard Medical School. White published 'Your Aching Back: A Doctor's Guide to Relief' and several other books on orthopedics. White speaks about the importance of confronting healthcare disparities and valuing diversity.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Augustus A. White, III, Section A2005_107_001_005, TRT: 0:27:31 2005/04/22

Dr. Augustus White III and his wife, Anita White, had three daughters together. White describes his daughters and their accomplishments. His oldest daughter, Alissa White lived in Stockholm, Sweden and was the country's first women's pole vaulting champion. His second daughter, Atina White, studied intercultural relations at

Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and the youngest, Annica White, worked for The Partnership, an organization that helps companies recruit, retain and advance professionals of color. White reflects upon his life and his future plans. He describes how he would like to be remembered and concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.