

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Edwin Rigaud

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Rigaud, Edwin, 1943-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Edwin Rigaud,
<b>Dates:</b>	March 23, 2006
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2006
<b>Physical Description:</b>	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:17:53).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Corporate executive and production company entrepreneur Edwin Rigaud (1943 - ) was the first African American line vice president in the history of Proctor & Gamble. Rigaud has also held appointments as the first executive director of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati and founded Enova Partners, LLC and Enova Tech, LLC, which are both plastic molding businesses. Rigaud was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 23, 2006, in Cincinnati, Ohio. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2006_049
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Businessman and civic leader Edwin Joseph Rigaud was born to Army Sergeant Edwin Rigaud and Mabel Perrilliat Rigaud on June 25, 1943 in New Orleans, Louisiana. He attended Corpus Christi School, which was located in the largest African American Catholic parish in the Western Hemisphere. One of Rigaud's high school teachers was the famous activist Phillip Berrigan (brother of activist

Daniel Berrigan). Rigaud graduated from St. Augustine High School in 1961. Earning a B.S. degree in chemistry from Xavier University in New Orleans in 1965, he married Carole Tyler and then moved to Cincinnati, Ohio where he went to work for Procter & Gamble. There, Rigaud became the first African American hired at the management level in the Food Product Development Department of R&D at Procter & Gamble. He received his M.S. degree in biochemistry from the University of Cincinnati in 1973.

In his thirty-six years at Procter & Gamble, Rigaud was one of the first African Americans in the corporate research area. Moving to marketing and general management, guided by Procter & Gamble executives Ken Ericson and Mike Milligan, he attended the Advanced Management Course at Harvard University, and in 1992, Rigaud became the first African American line vice president in the history of Procter & Gamble, eventually serving as Vice President of Food and Beverage Products and finally as Vice President of Government Relations in North America in 1996.

Also, in 1996, Rigaud, on loan as an executive from Procter & Gamble, was appointed the first executive director of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati. He was appointed to the National Museum and Library Services Board by President George W. Bush in 2002. In 2004, Rigaud moved from executive director to President and CEO of the museum. He also started his own firm, Enova Partners, LLC and Enova Tech, LLC, which are both plastic injection-molding businesses in the automotive and consumer products industries.

Rigaud has a long record of service including serving on the boards of The Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, Xavier University in Cincinnati, Xavier University of New Orleans, Children's Hospital of Cincinnati, the Ohio Board of Regents, the Cincinnati Zoo, the Queen City Club, the Metropolitan Club, and the Northern Kentucky Chamber Board.

Rigaud is married to Carole Tyler Rigaud and has three grown children. He enjoys painting, playing jazz guitar and golf.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Edwin Rigaud was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 23, 2006, in Cincinnati, Ohio, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Corporate executive and production company entrepreneur Edwin Rigaud (1943 - ) was the first African American line vice president in the history

of Proctor & Gamble. Rigaud has also held appointments as the first executive director of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati and founded Enova Partners, LLC and Enova Tech, LLC, which are both plastic molding businesses.

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## **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®.

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## **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.

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## **Controlled Access Terms**

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### **Persons:**

Rigaud, Edwin, 1943-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

## **Subjects:**

African Americans--Interviews  
Rigaud, Edwin, 1943---Interviews

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## **Organizations:**

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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Procter & Gamble Company.

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## **Occupations:**

Production Company Entrepreneur

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Corporate Executive

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

BusinessMakers

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## **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 Edwin Rigaud, March 23, 2006. 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).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Edwin Rigaud, Section A2006\_049\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:30 2006/03/23

Edwin Rigaud was born on June 25, 1943 in New Orleans, Louisiana to Mabel Perrilliat Rigaud and Edwin Rigaud, Sr. Rigaud's paternal great great-grandfather, Paris, McCutcheon, migrated to New Orleans from Northern Ireland. He also talks about possible Rigaud ancestors from Haiti and Canada. Rigaud's grandfather, Albert Rigaud, worked as a house painter and plasterer. Rigaud's maternal grandfather, Mitchell Perrilliat, worked at an industrial plant, where he was killed in an accident. His maternal grandmother, Ernestine Marquez Brahms, was a seamstress. Rigaud's father served in the U.S. Navy and U.S. Army, while his mother taught sewing classes. Rigaud describes his parents' personalities and whom he takes after. As a child, he stayed home from school for a semester because of his asthma. Determined not to fall

behind on his studies, Rigaud read the encyclopedia. Growing up in a Creole neighborhood, Rigaud enjoyed eating his father's freshly caught fish and oysters. He also drew pictures for his mother.

Video Oral History Interview with Edwin Rigaud, Section  
A2006\_049\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:26 2006/03/23

Edwin Rigaud attended New Orleans, Louisiana's Corpus Christi Elementary School, which was part of the largest African American Catholic parish, Corpus Christi-Epiphany Catholic Church. Rigaud and his younger brother, Ronald Rigaud, attended Mardi Gras together as children. He recalls the poverty and poor education that affected New Orleans' African American community, in contrast to the parades and vibrant culture of the French Quarter. Rigaud went on to excel in math and science at New Orleans' St. Augustine High School, where his English teacher was activist Philip Berrigan. Inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's biography, Rigaud aspired to study architecture at Louisiana State University, but was rejected due to racial discrimination. He attended Xavier University of Louisiana instead. There, Rigaud served as student body president and was invited to attend the march on Selma, Alabama by Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Rigaud also describes his theory of cognitive learning.

Video Oral History Interview with Edwin Rigaud, Section  
A2006\_049\_001\_003, TRT: 0:28:57 2006/03/23

Edwin Rigaud attended Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans, Louisiana on a scholarship. He served as the president of both the student body and Alpha Phi Omega Fraternity. Rigaud met his wife, Carole Tyler Rigaud, who was the niece of New Orleans musician Red Tyler, and also encountered Fats Domino in New Orleans. Rigaud remembers Norman Francis as a dean at Xavier University of Louisiana. He also describes how New Orleans' African American communities were segregated based on skin color. After graduation, Rigaud moved to Cincinnati, Ohio to work as a chemist in research and development at Procter and Gamble Company. He became the company's first African American manager with the guidance of his mentor, Kenneth Ericson. Rigaud's projects included the development of Pringles and Duncan Hines cake mixes.

Rigaud transferred to the marketing department, and became its general manager. He goes on to describe Procter and Gamble Company's diversity training strategies.

Video Oral History Interview with Edwin Rigaud, Section  
A2006\_049\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:36 2006/03/23

Edwin Rigaud moved in the late 1960s to Cincinnati, Ohio, where he brought a racial discrimination suit against a real estate company with the help of Housing Opportunities Made Equal. After a car accident, he underwent surgery to remove his spleen. Rigaud became the first African American line vice president of Procter and Gamble Company in Cincinnati, Ohio, while his friend, Ross Love, was the first black staff vice president. In the late 1990s, Rigaud became the first CEO of the National Underground Freedom Center after being recommended by the National Conference for Community and Justice leader, Robert C. Harrod. During his tenure at the museum, historians Richard Rabinowitz and Dan Hurley were consulted regarding Underground Railroad history, and Lawrence C. Hawkins and Nathaniel R. Jones served on the board of directors. Rigaud reflects upon racism in the United States and explains his freedom hierarchy theory. He also shares an anecdote about acquiring a piece of slavery history for the museum.

Video Oral History Interview with Edwin Rigaud, Section  
A2006\_049\_001\_005, TRT: 0:29:13 2006/03/23

Edwin Rigaud gained support for the museum from Congressmen Charles Blockson, Rob Portman and Ralph Regula, who endorsed the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center Act in an effort to secure financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Interior. Rigaud recounts stories of slavery that he learned through his work at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. Ohio's history of slavery involved abolitionists John Rankin and John Parker, and Margaret Garner, the enslaved woman who inspired Toni Morrison's novel, 'Beloved.' Rigaud shares the origin of the term hush puppy, and talks about Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' Before opening the museum, Rigaud debated with board members on the inclusion of historical

figures who were thought to be controversial, like Muhammad Ali. Rigaud describes the exhibits at the Freedom Center, including a dramatic reenactment of the story of John Parker with an introduction by Oprah Winfrey.

Video Oral History Interview with Edwin Rigaud, Section  
A2006\_049\_001\_006, TRT: 0:27:12 2006/03/23

Edwin Rigaud founded the industrial company Enova Premier, LLC in Louisville, Kentucky, after he stepped down as president of the National Railroad Freedom Center and retired from Procter and Gamble Company in Cincinnati, Ohio. Rigaud also became a part owner of the Cincinnati Reds baseball team. He talks about the lack of African American owned businesses, and describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community. Rigaud also talks about his marriage and his children's accomplishments. He reflects upon his life, legacy, and how he would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Edwin Rigaud, Section  
A2006\_049\_001\_007, TRT: 0:23:59 2006/03/23

Edwin Rigaud narrates his photographs.