

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dennis Paul Kimbro

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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>	Kimbro, Dennis Paul, 1950-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dennis Paul Kimbro,
<b>Dates:</b>	April 12, 2006
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2006
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:10:25).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Management consultant and author Dennis Paul Kimbro (1950 - ) wrote the popular books, 'Think and Grow Rich: A Black Choice' and 'What Keeps Me Standing: A Black Grandmother's Guide to Peace, Hope & Inspiration'. He was highly sought after as a public speaker and management consultant. Kimbro was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 12, 2006, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2006_074
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Author of *Think and Grow Rich: A Black Choice*, Dennis Kimbro was born December 29, 1950, in Jersey City, New Jersey. In 1972, he received his B.A. and M.A. degrees from the University of Oklahoma. He later earned his PhD in political science at Northwestern University, researching wealth and poverty in underdeveloped countries.

Kimbro wrote *Think and Grow Rich: A Black Choice* as an updating and extension

of the work of Napoleon Hill, who wrote the 1937 bestseller *Think and Grow Rich* after researching the practices of highly successful persons, and who left at his death an unfinished manuscript directed towards African Americans. Kimbro was commissioned by the Napoleon Hill Foundation to complete the manuscript. Published in 1991, Kimbro and Hill's book became a number-one bestseller.

Clients of Kimbro's lectures have included General Motors, Walt Disney, Frito-Lay and Wells Fargo. He has appeared on television shows including *Today* and CNN's *Larry King Live*, and in publications including *Success*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times* and *USA Today*. He is listed in *Who's Who in Black America*; a recipient of the Dale Carnegie Achievement Award; and a past Director of the Center of Entrepreneurship at Clark Atlanta University. In addition, in 1996, he served as one of eight national judges for the prestigious *Ernst & Young USA Today Entrepreneur of the Year*, held in Palm Springs, California.

In 2005, Kimbro's second edition of *What Keeps Me Standing: A Black Grandmother's Guide to Peace, Hope & Inspiration* was released. He is married, lives in Atlanta and is the father of three daughters.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dennis Paul Kimbro was conducted by Shawn Wilson on April 12, 2006, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Management consultant and author Dennis Paul Kimbro (1950 - ) wrote the popular books, 'Think and Grow Rich: A Black Choice' and 'What Keeps Me Standing: A Black Grandmother's Guide to Peace, Hope & Inspiration'. He was highly sought after as a public speaker and management consultant.

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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:

Kimbro, Dennis Paul, 1950-

Wilson, Shawn (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Kimbro, Dennis Paul, 1950---Interviews

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African American authors--Interviews

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Business consultants--Interviews

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Lecturers--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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## **Occupations:**

Author

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

MediaMakers

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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 Dennis Paul Kimbro, April 12, 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 Dennis Paul Kimbro, Section  
A2006\_074\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:10 2006/04/12

Dennis Paul Kimbro was born on December 29, 1950 in Jersey City, New Jersey to Mary Anderson Kimbro and Donald Kimbro. Kimbro's paternal grandparents were servants in North Carolina, and his father was born in Ohio. Kimbro's mother was raised by her aunt and uncle in Kearny, New Jersey. She was an avid reader and spiritual woman, and worked as a nanny for a wealthy Jewish family. Kimbro's parents met on a train in Oklahoma as his father was returning from World War II. They married and moved to New Jersey, where their two sons were born. Kimbro grew up in the diverse and working class city of Kearney, New Jersey, and recalls that he rarely saw an unemployed African American man during his childhood. As a former serviceman, Kimbro's father expected his sons to behave as gentlemen and keep a clean house. He remembers visiting his great aunt and uncle, going to a New York Yankees game with his father and watching the television program 'Biography.' Kimbro attended Columbia School in East Orange, New Jersey.

African American authors--Interviews.

Business consultants--Interviews.

Lecturers--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Dennis Paul Kimbro, Section  
A2006\_074\_001\_002, TRT: 0:28:40 2006/04/12

Dennis Paul Kimbro reflects upon the work of W.E.B. Du Bois and historically black colleges and universities. He

was a student at Teaneck, New Jersey's Benjamin Franklin Junior High School when President John Fitzgerald Kennedy was shot. He recalls his parents' reactions to the news, and to the deaths of such figures as Malcolm X, Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. and Emmett Till. He attended Teaneck High School, and although the school was predominately white, the Civil Rights Movement and other 1960s movements were often discussed. He remembers the Newark riot and the building of public housing. With the help of his counselor, Kimbro attended the University of Oklahoma in Norman, Oklahoma for his undergraduate degree. He pledged Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, and married Patricia McCauley Kimbro as a college senior. After working a year at Texas Instruments, he enrolled in Northwestern University's graduate program in political science, where he was inspired to write his book, 'What Makes the Great Great.'

Video Oral History Interview with Dennis Paul Kimbro, Section A2006\_074\_001\_003, TRT: 0:30:30 2006/04/12

Dennis Paul Kimbro's family expected him to attend college. He pledged Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity at the University of Oklahoma, where he was an inquisitive student and avid reader. While earning his master's degree at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, Kimbro became interested in studying successful African Americans. He began interviewing African American leaders across the United States to understand what makes a successful person. Out of these interviews, Kimbro developed the nine values of greatness outlined in his book, 'What Makes the Great Great.' Kimbro describes the nine values, and lists some of the people he interviewed including Earl G. Graves, Sr., Walter J. Turnbull and Bishop T.D. Jakes. He recounts stories from Maynard Jackson and Johnnetta B. Cole's interviews. Kimbro was contacted by William Clement Stone of the Napoleon Hill Foundation asked to finish Napoleon Hill's African American version of 'Think and Grow Rich,' which became Kimbro's first published book.

Video Oral History Interview with Dennis Paul Kimbro, Section A2006\_074\_001\_004, TRT: 0:30:15 2006/04/12

Dennis Paul Kimbro worked on 'What Makes the Great

Great' for seven years, publishing other two books during that period. After Harvey Mackay read one of Kimbro's articles and requested the manuscript for 'Think and Grow Rich,' he helped Kimbro find an agent and publisher for the book. For seven years, Kimbro and his family had struggled financially while he wrote. He remembers having his water cut off and pleading to have it restored. That all changed when his first book was published. Kimbro then wrote 'Daily Motivations for African-American Success.' 'What Makes the Great Great' was then finally published in 1998, and Kimbro remembers how happy he felt. He describes the book's impact on his speeches and on Michigan State University's 2000 Big Ten basketball championship. Forthcoming at the time of the interview, Kimbro's next book, 'What Keeps Me Standing,' was an anthology of wisdom from African American grandmothers. He recalls in particular a letter from Rosie Hodges, a grandmother in Chicago, Illinois.

Video Oral History Interview with Dennis Paul Kimbro, Section A2006\_074\_001\_005, TRT: 0:10:50 2006/04/12

Dennis Paul Kimbro remembers the letter he received from Janey Coverdale, a grandmother who lost two of her grandsons in 1995 in the Oklahoma City bombing. In 1992, Clark Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia established the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development. The dean, Edward D. Irons, asked Kimbro to become a professor and the center's director. At the time of the interview, Kimbro was working on his next book, 'The Wealth Choice: Success Secrets of Black Millionaires.' This book considers the lives of successful African America millionaires in order to advise future generations on how to succeed. Kimbro talks about Barbara L. Thomas' success as a leader of the National Black MBA Association. He also reflects upon his life and how he would like to be remembered.