

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Russ Mitchell

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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>	Mitchell, Russ, 1960-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Russ Mitchell,
<b>Dates:</b>	March 20, 2007
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2007
<b>Physical Description:</b>	3 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:29:53).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Television news anchor Russ Mitchell (1960 - ) worked in news broadcasting at television stations throughout Missouri and Texas before starting his long-term career with CBS. Mitchell was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 20, 2007, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2007_101
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

CBS Newscaster Russ Mitchell was born Russell Edward Mitchell on March 25, 1960, in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1966, Mitchell's family moved to Rock Hill, a St. Louis suburb. After a positive experience in a high school journalism class, Mitchell received the opportunity to work at St. Louis' ABC-TV affiliate, KTVI-TV, where he remained for a year gaining experience in television news. In 1979, Mitchell began attending the University of Missouri, and was accepted into the university's journalism school as a junior. In 1982, Mitchell graduated with his B.A. degree in journalism.

In 1982, Mitchell's professional broadcasting career began at KMBC-TV in Kansas City, where he worked as a reporter trainee. In 1983, Mitchell moved to Dallas, Texas, where he served as the education and general assignment reporter for a morning news show called "Daybreak" at WFAA-TV. Mitchell moved back to St. Louis in 1985 where he worked as a full-time reporter for KTVI-TV; his two years at the station were spent producing an acclaimed series on the violent street gangs of neighboring East St. Louis, Illinois.

In 1987, Mitchell became a weekend anchor and daily reporter for CBS's affiliate in St. Louis, KMOV-TV, where he would remain for five years. Mitchell was awarded the Best Reporter honor from Missouri's United Press International in 1989, and one year later, his wife, Erica, gave birth to his first daughter. In 1992, Mitchell moved from KMOV to CBS's news team, working as an anchor for the network's news program "Up to the Minute", which covered stories from across the world. In 1993, Mitchell became a news correspondent for CBS's "Eye to Eye" program, and spent time covering the United States operations in Haiti.

Mitchell became a Washington correspondent in 1995 and covered the GOP National Convention. Mitchell was the co-anchor of CBS's "Saturday Early Show" in 1997 alongside Tracy Smith; that same year, he would receive an Emmy Award for his coverage of the crash of TWA Flight 800. In 1999, Mitchell joined the "CBS Evening News Saturday Edition" team, and in 2002, he became a correspondent for CBS's "Sunday Morning" program. In 2007, Mitchell was hired as a hard news anchor for CBS' "Early Show".

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Russ Mitchell was conducted by Shawn Wilson on March 20, 2007, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 3 Betacame SP videocassettes. Television news anchor Russ Mitchell (1960 - ) worked in news broadcasting at television stations throughout Missouri and Texas before starting his long-term career with CBS.

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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:

Mitchell, Russ, 1960-

Wilson, Shawn (Interviewer)

Burghilea, Neculai (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Mitchell, Russ, 1960---Interviews

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African American television journalists--Interviews

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African American television personalities--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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CBS, Inc.

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## **Occupations:**

Television News Anchor

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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 Russ Mitchell, March 20, 2007. 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

## 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 Russ Mitchell, Section  
B2007\_101\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:31 2007/03/20

Russ Mitchell was born on March 25, 1960 in St. Louis, Missouri to Julia Hamilton Mitchell and Lowell Mitchell. His paternal great-grandparents were from Providence, Kentucky. Mitchell's paternal grandparents married in Kentucky, before moving to St. Louis, where Mitchell's grandfather owned a vacuum and sewing machine repair business. A graduate of Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri, Mitchell's father was a systems analyst for McDonnell Douglas. Mitchell's maternal grandfather, Edward DePass Hamilton, graduated from Harvard University in 1906, and taught at Howard University. He then served as the principal at Edward J. Simmons School in St. Louis, where Mitchell's grandmother also taught. Upon graduating from Howard University, Mitchell's mother taught in St. Louis Public Schools. Mitchell grew up in a middle-class community in North St. Louis, and began kindergarten at Ashland Branch in St. Louis, until his family moved to the predominantly white suburbs of St. Louis County, Missouri.

African American families--Missouri--Saint Louis.

Discrimination.

African American educators.

Segregation.

St. Louis Public Schools (Saint Louis, Mo.)

University of Missouri—Columbia

Video Oral History Interview with Russ Mitchell, Section  
B2007\_101\_001\_001E, TRT:

Video Oral History Interview with Russ Mitchell, Section  
B2007\_101\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:14 2007/03/20

Russ Mitchell's family moved from North St. Louis in Missouri to the predominately white St. Louis County when Mitchell was six years old. His parents subscribed to the St. Louis Evening Whirl and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. As a boy, he followed the coverage of major events, such as Barbara Jordan's speech during the Watergate scandal, and the assassinations of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and President John F. Kennedy. Mitchell also remembers African American journalists, Julius Hunter and Stan Stovall, who worked in St. Louis during the 1970s. At Webster Groves High School, Mitchell wrote for the ECHO school newspaper; and the St. Louis American published his editorial about the apartheid in South Africa. Heeding the advice of his journalism teacher, Susan O'Connell, Mitchell attended the Urban Journalism Workshop for aspiring minority journalists, founded by Robert P. Knight at the University of Missouri in Columbia. During his senior year, he was the switchboard operator at KTVI-TV in St. Louis.

African American newspapers--Missouri.

Watergate Affair, 1972-1974--Press coverage.

Television news anchors.

University of Missouri--Columbia. School of Journalism.  
Educators.

Video Oral History Interview with Russ Mitchell, Section  
B2007\_101\_001\_003, TRT: 0:30:08 2007/03/20

Russ Mitchell was accepted into the University of Missouri in Columbia, Missouri in 1978. There, he took courses in African American literature with Vice Chancellor Walter C. Daniel, and African American history with Arvarh E. Strickland. During his junior year, Mitchell enrolled at the Missouri School of Journalism. Although he found the job market for African American reporters limited, he was still determined to start a career

in journalism. Upon graduating, Mitchell worked as an assistant reporter at KMBC-TV, an ABC affiliate in Kansas City, Missouri. Then, he became a full-time reporter at WFAA-TV, a CBS affiliate in Dallas, Texas, at that time the country's eighth largest television market. There, he worked with anchorwoman Iola Johnson, and Paula Madison, who was the station's public affairs director. Mitchell was eventually promoted to anchor of the station's morning news program, 'News 8 Daybreak.' He describes the television anchor's role in determining the stories that are relayed to the public.

African American college students.

Broadcast journalism.

KMBC-TV (Television station : Kansas City, Mo.)

WFAA-TV (Television station : Dallas, Tex.)

Tornadoes--Texas--Dallas.