

# 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
<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 Betacam SP videocassettes (1:29:53).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Television news anchor Russ Mitchell (1960 - ) was involved in television news broadcasting for over two decades, working for various stations in Missouri and Texas before starting a 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 Betacam SP videocassettes. Television news anchor Russ Mitchell (1960 - ) was involved in television news broadcasting for over two decades, working for various stations in Missouri and Texas before starting a 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)

Burghelea, 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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### 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 7/9/2012 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, March 20, 2007

Video Oral History Interview with Russ Mitchell, Section B2007\_101\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:31  
2007/03/20

Russ Mitchell slates his interview and gives his favorites. Mitchell was born on March 25, 1960 in St. Louis, Missouri. Mitchell's mother, Julia Jeannette Hamilton was also born in St. Louis Missouri on November 10, 1933. Mitchell's mother was a teacher for thirty years in the St. Louis, Missouri public school system. She attended Howard University, where her mother went to school and where her father taught at one time. His father, Lowell Edward Mitchell was born in St. Louis Missouri on April 14, 1933. He was a systems analyst at McDonnell Douglas, which was a defense contractor in St. Louis. Before working at McDonnell Douglas, Mitchell's father worked with his father, who owned a vacuum cleaner and sewing machine repair shop on Easton Avenue in St. Louis. Mitchell grew up with his two siblings and cousins on San Francisco Avenue in North St. Louis. Mitchell went to Ashland Branch School for kindergarten and half of first grade before his family moved to St. Louis County in 1966. Mitchell recalls his experiences with racial discrimination, growing up in his new neighborhood, and how it made him more aware of what it meant to be African American.

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\_002, TRT: 0:29:14  
2007/03/20

Russ Mitchell attended Webster Grove High School in Webster Grove Missouri. During his junior or senior year in high school, Mitchell was invited to the University of Missouri to attend a two week workshop for minority students interested in the field of journalism. By the time Mitchell left the program, he was hooked and wanted to pursue a career in broadcast journalism. His high school journalism teacher, Susan O'Connell, encouraged Mitchell to go to the workshop over the summer because she recognized his potential to be a good journalist. In high school, Mitchell wrote for his school's newspaper, Webster Grove's "Echo". When he was seventeen years of age, he wrote an editorial for his school newspaper based on a "New York Times" article he had read about apartheid in South Africa. He remembers calling a journalist from the "St. Louis American" named Greg Freeman, who was a college student at the time. Freeman would later go on to become a columnist at the "Post-Dispatch". Mitchell introduced himself to Freeman and asked him to take a look at the editorial he had written. Freeman not only reviewed Mitchell's article but published it because he thought Mitchell had done such a nice job. Mitchell was very proud of having his article published in the newspaper-- it also encouraged him to want to become a journalist even more. When Mitchell graduated from high school in 1978, the University of Missouri's School of Journalism was his first choice.

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

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 that same year, 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.

African American college students.

Broadcast journalism.

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

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

Tornadoes--Texas--Dallas.