

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Samuel C. Thompson, Jr.

Overview of the Collection

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| Repository: | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com |
| Creator: | Thompson, Samuel C., 1943- |
| Title: | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Samuel C. Thompson, Jr., |
| Dates: | April 17, 2007 |
| Bulk Dates: | 2007 |
| Physical Description: | 5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:15:50). |
| Abstract: | Academic administrator, tax lawyer, and law professor Samuel C. Thompson, Jr. (1943 -) served as the partner-in-charge of the tax department at the law firm of Schiff Hardin & Waite in Chicago, Illinois. He taught law classes at the University of Virginia, UCLA and served as dean of the University of Miami School of Law. Thompson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 17, 2007, in Los Angeles, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| Identification: | A2007_145 |
| Language: | The interview and records are in English. |

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Tax lawyer Samuel Coleman Thompson, Jr. was born on October 25, 1943 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Thompson and his family can trace their lineage to the 1600s. After Thompson and his family moved to the industrial town of Steelton, Pennsylvania in 1948, he graduated from Steelton High School in 1961. Thompson then received his B.S. degree from West Chester University in Pennsylvania and his M.A. degree from the University of Pennsylvania's

prestigious Wharton School and Graduate School of Economics in 1969.

Between Thompson's first and second years of law school at the University of Pennsylvania, he was drafted into the Vietnam War, where he served for three years. During Thompson's tenure, he rose to the rank of Captain, serving as Commanding Officer of Headquarters Company and received the Navy Commendation Medal. After returning to the United States, Thompson received his J.D. degree from the University of Pennsylvania Law School and began working as a legal writing instructor.

Between 1971 and 1972, Thompson worked briefly for Davis Polk & Wardwell in New York. Shortly thereafter, he earned his L.L.M. degree in taxation from New York University while working as an assistant and associate professor of law at Northwestern University. In 1976, Thompson published his first book, *Pension Reform: How to Comply with ERISA*, and served as an attorney advisor in the Office of Tax Legislative Counsel and International Tax Counsel for the U.S. Treasury Department.

In 1977, Thompson joined the faculty at the University of Virginia School of Law until 1981. He then served as the partner-in-charge of the tax department at the law firm of Schiff Hardin & Waite in Chicago, Illinois until 1990, when he joined the UCLA Law School faculty. There, Thompson taught courses on mergers and acquisitions and corporate taxation.

In 1994, Thompson left UCLA's Law School to become the Dean of the University of Miami School of Law. During his tenure, Thompson created the Center for the Study of Mergers and Acquisitions and transferred it to the UCLA School of Law when he moved back to California in 2003. There, Thompson established the school's first two endowed chairs, the Center for Ethics & Public Service and the Children and Youth Law Clinic.

Thompson published numerous books throughout his professional career including *Federal Income Taxation of Domestic and Foreign Business Transactions*, *An Examination of the Effect of Recent Legislation on Commodity Tax Straddles and Investment Tax Credit: Alternative to the President's Flawed Dividend Plan, Financed by ETI Repeal (Extraterritorial Income Exclusion)*. Thompson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 17, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Samuel C. Thompson, Jr. was conducted by

Paul Brock on April 17, 2007, in Los Angeles, California, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Academic administrator, tax lawyer, and law professor Samuel C. Thompson, Jr. (1943 -) served as the partner-in-charge of the tax department at the law firm of Schiff Hardin & Waite in Chicago, Illinois. He taught law classes at the University of Virginia, UCLA and served as dean of the University of Miami School of Law.

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:

Thompson, Samuel C., 1943-

Brock, Paul (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Thompson, Samuel C., 1943---Interviews

African American lawyers--Interviews.

African American law teachers--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

University of California, Los Angeles. School of Law

Schiff, Hardin & Waite

University of California, Los Angeles. School of Law

Occupations:

Academic Administrator

Tax Lawyer

Law Professor

HistoryMakers® Category:

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 Samuel C. Thompson, Jr., April 17, 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 (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 Samuel C. Thompson, Jr., Section A2007_145_001_001, TRT: 0:28:23 2007/04/17

Samuel C. Thompson, Jr. was born on October 25, 1943 in

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania to Emmitt Nickens Thompson and Samuel C. Thompson, Sr. His maternal grandfather, Robert Nickens, traced his ancestry to Richard Nickens, who was freed from slavery in Virginia in 1680; and Thompson's maternal grandmother, Helen Wilson Nickens, was born in Virginia to a white doctor and an African American woman. Thompson's paternal great-great-grandparents, Prudence Ann Thompson and Jacob Thompson, were farmers in Compass, Pennsylvania; and his grandparents, Fray Thompson and Edward Thompson, raised his father in the nearby town of Coatesville, Pennsylvania. His father went on to attend Wilberforce University, and served in World War II. He then obtained a courier position at the Pennsylvania State Capitol, while Thompson's mother worked as a domestic. Thompson was the oldest of three siblings, and grew up in Steelton, Pennsylvania, where he attended the all-black Hygienic School and the integrated Steelton-Highspire High School.

African American grandparents--Virginia.

African American grandparents--Pennsylvania--Coatesville.

African American parents--Pennsylvania.

Childhood--Pennsylvania--Steelton.

Education--Pennsylvania--Steelton.

Video Oral History Interview with Samuel C. Thompson, Jr., Section A2007_145_001_002, TRT: 0:29:38 2007/04/17

Samuel C. Thompson, Jr. experienced integrated education for the first time at Steelton-Highspire High School in Steelton, Pennsylvania. There, Thompson joined the track and football teams, and took part in oratorical contests. Although a white teacher tried to dissuade him from participating, he won a city-wide speech competition during his senior year. Upon graduating in 1961, Thompson enrolled on a football scholarship at the Millersville State College in Millersville, Pennsylvania. He later transferred to West Chester State College in West Chester, Pennsylvania, where he studied secondary education. Thompson joined the U.S. Marine Corps during college; and, after graduating in 1965, deferred his service to study at the University of Pennsylvania Law School in

Philadelphia, where he was one of a few African American students. He temporarily left law school to serve in Vietnam. After returning to the United States, Thompson completed an M.B.A. degree at the Wharton School, and then returned to law school.

School integration--Pennsylvania--Steelton.

Education--Pennsylvania--Steelton.

High school athletes--Pennsylvania--Steelton.

Millersville State College.

West Chester State College.

University of Pennsylvania Law School.

United States Marine Corps.

Video Oral History Interview with Samuel C. Thompson, Jr., Section A2007_145_001_003, TRT: 0:29:11 2007/04/17

Samuel C. Thompson, Jr. graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Law School, and accepted a position at the law firm of Davis Polk and Wardwell in New York City. While there, he also earned a master's degree in tax law from New York University. Thompson remained at the firm for one year; and, in 1972, moved to Chicago, Illinois to teach tax law at the Northwestern University School of Law under Professor Robert Childres. In 1975, Thompson returned to Davis Polk and Wardwell; and, in 1976, he became the first African American counsel in the tax policy office of the U.S. Department of the Treasury. He went on to teach at the University of Virginia School of Law in Charlottesville, Virginia, and then joined the law firm of Schiff Hardin and Waite in Washington, D.C. Thompson was later appointed as dean of the University of Miami School of Law in Coral Gables, Florida, and worked as a consultant to South Africa's National Treasury. He also wrote numerous publications on corporate and tax law.

Davis, Polk & Wardwell.

New York University.

Northwestern University. School of Law.

United States. Department of the Treasury.

University of Virginia. School of Law.

Schiff, Hardin & Waite.

University Of Miami. School of Law.

Video Oral History Interview with Samuel C. Thompson, Jr., Section
A2007_145_001_004, TRT: 0:29:16 2007/04/17

Samuel C. Thompson, Jr. was instrumental in the founding of an NAACP chapter during his undergraduate career at West Chester State College. During his first year of law school in 1965, he worked on a civil rights project in Leland, Mississippi, where he was exposed to southern segregation for the first time. Over the course of his career in law, Thompson does not recall facing discrimination from his colleagues. However, he encountered difficulties while serving as the dean of the University of Miami School of Law, where he attempted to revitalize the program by reducing the number of students and strengthening the curriculum. His plan was met with resistance from the faculty, and the president of the university ultimately asked him to resign. Thompson went on to serve as a professor at the Yale Law School in New Haven, Connecticut, and as a tax policy advisor at the South African National Treasury. He reflects upon his legacy; and talks about his family, and fellow attorney Wayne McCoy.

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People--Pennsylvania.

University Of Miami. School of Law.

Yale Law School.

South Africa. Ministry of Finance.

Video Oral History Interview with Samuel C. Thompson, Jr., Section
A2007_145_001_005, TRT: 0:19:22 2007/04/17

Samuel C. Thompson, Jr. enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania Law School following the U.S. Supreme Court decision of Regents of the University of California v. Bakke, which upheld the legality of affirmative action in 1978. Many were opposed to affirmative action policies at the time, including law professor Paul G. Haskell, who published 'Legal Education on the Academic Plantation' in the American Bar Journal. Thompson responded to this article with his own, 'A Response to Professor Haskell's

Academic Plantation Theory,' and argued for affirmative action by referencing the success of himself and other affirmative action students in the legal field. During this time, Thompson was a professor at the Northwestern University School of Law in Evanston, Illinois. He also wrote for the National Black Law Journal, which was published by the University of California, Los Angeles in Los Angeles, California. Thompson concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.

University of Pennsylvania Law School.

Northwestern University. School of Law.

National Black Law Journal.

Photographs.