Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Paul McDonald

Overview of the Collection

Repository: The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616
info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com

Creator: Paul McDonald

Title: The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Paul McDonald,

Dates: April 19, 2007

Bulk Dates: 2007

Physical Description: 4 Betacam SP videocassettes (1:57:18).

Abstract: Technology entrepreneur and technology executive Paul McDonald (1949 - ) founded a series of companies aimed at researching infrastructure and systems development, including Creative Systems Business Development Foundation and The Pilot Business Corporation. McDonald was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 19, 2007, in Los Angeles, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.

Identification: A2007_151

Language: The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Technology entrepreneur and technology executive Paul Gregory McDonald was born on February 23, 1949 in Chicago, Illinois to Josephine McDonald and Frederick Douglass McDonald, an evangelical minister. McDonald grew up in Chicago, down the street from his mentor, Major League Baseball Hall of Famer, Ernie Banks. McDonald attended Hirsch High School in Chicago, where he was heavily involved in Operation Breadbasket and became the business manager for the Young Pushers, an offshoot of Jesse Jackson’s Operation Push organization.

In 1967, McDonald graduated from Hirsch High School and was drafted by the Chicago Cubs. However, his baseball career was interrupted when he was drafted by the United States military. McDonald served in the Vietnam War as a television cameraman, flying over the country filming the terrain. Although he did not attend college, McDonald took management courses with Xerox, IBM, Minolta and Fidelity Union Life Insurance. With this experience, McDonald founded a series of companies aimed at researching infrastructure and systems development, including Creative Systems Business Development Foundation, The Pilot Business Corporation, Global Business Development Architects, Common Communications Commission, the Cooperative Sports Incubator and CyberPark, U.S.A. McDonald also led a partnership with downtown Los Angeles’ community development agencies in order to foster business development in the area. In 1991, McDonald founded Global Business Incubation, Inc. (GBI), and became its Chief Research Officer. The company was started as a joint venture with Loyola Marymount University to connect California businesses with technology and manufacturing opportunities. As Chief Research Officer, McDonald oversaw technology and multi-media infrastructure development. In 1993, GBI and Loyola Marymount joined the National Center for Manufacturing Sciences in creating an Advanced Manufacturing Science and Technology Center.
McDonald is also responsible for the Lou Myers Scenario Motion Picture Institute Theater, which helped 100 inner city youth apprentices in the building of a film studio. In 2000, McDonald received the White House Millennium Council Award for encouraging business development in Los Angeles.

Paul McDonald was interviewed by "The HistoryMakers" on April 19, 2007.

**Scope and Content**

This life oral history interview with Paul McDonald was conducted by Paul Brock on April 19, 2007, in Los Angeles, California, and was recorded on 4 Betacam SP videocassettes. Technology entrepreneur and technology executive Paul McDonald (1949 - ) founded a series of companies aimed at researching infrastructure and systems development, including Creative Systems Business Development Foundation and The Pilot Business Corporation.

**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:**

- Paul McDonald
- Brock, Paul (Interviewer)
- Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

**Subjects:**
Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Paul McDonald

Organizations:

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Global Business Incubation, Inc.

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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


Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 8/9/2011 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.
Paul McDonald begins the interview by discussing his family history. He describes his earliest memories of his mother, Josephine Harper McDonald, and his father, Frederick Douglas McDonald Sr. His grandmother married Russell Harper, a man who was Caucasian and African American biracial descent. Although Harper was born during slavery, around 1855, he was a free man. Russell was fair in complexion and often passed for white. McDonald was the youngest of thirteen siblings; he was not very close to his siblings due to a ten year age gap. One of McDonald’s earliest memories of attending Emmitt Till’s funeral with his father.

African American families--Illinois--Chicago
Racially mixed people--America
Till, Emmett, 1941-1955--Death and burial

Paul McDonald describes the horror he felt attending Emmit Till’s funeral. This was the first time McDonald no longer felt safe amongst his family. McDonald recalls being disturbed at a young age by the power ministers had over their congregations. McDonald believes that in order for African Americans to be successful in the United States, they must build institutions. He recalls an event from his childhood in which he attended a baseball game with Most Valuable Player Ernie Banks. McDonald was not aware of Banks' celebrity status at the time, and was frightened by the crowds of Caucasians approaching him for an autograph. He describes what life was like on the south side of Chicago during the 1950s. McDonald goes into great detail about his relationship with his father and how he helped influence his life and personal philosophy.

Till, Emmett, 1941-1955--Death and burial
African American churches.
Banks, Ernie, 1931-
Chicago (Ill.)--Social life and customs.
African American fathers--Attitudes.

Paul McDonald discusses the influence his father had over his college career. His father did not trust public institutions and suggested that McDonald and he develop their own college, called Common Communication Commission. McDonald believes that the destruction of Rosewood, Florida and Black Wall Street is linked to the disenfranchisement of African Americans. As a teenager, McDonald worked with Eddie Thomas at Curtom Records. McDonald discusses his involvement and participation in developing a model for building wealth within the African American community.

African American fathers--Attitudes.
African American universities and colleges
Thomas, Eddie, musician
Wealth--Moral and ethical aspects--United States.
Paul McDonald discusses the importance of Pastor Beverly Allen in the development of a model for African American-owned institutions. Pastor Beverly Allen brought the intelligence of someone who cares about others to McDonald’s model. He believes that there are certain political strategies that deliberately disable African American economics. He discusses Eddie Thomas in further detail, as well as meeting Curtis Mayfield and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. McDonald stresses the importance of African Americans reclaiming their community, especially in the products and merchandise they purchase. He discusses at great length the importance of African Americans' awareness of economics and how it affects the community. McDonald closes the interview by describing the goals he has for the year 2020.

Thomas, Eddie, musician
African American--United States
Economics--United States
African Americans--Economic conditions.