



Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Terrence Roberts

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: | Terrence Roberts |
| Title: | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Terrence Roberts, |
| Dates: | July 9, 2007 |
| Bulk Dates: | 2007 |
| Physical Description: | 5 Betacam SP videocassettes (2:06:40). |
| Abstract: | Management executive and psychology professor Terrence Roberts (1941 -) is a member of the "Little Rock Nine." He is currently the CEO of Terrence J. Roberts & Associates, a management consulting firm that focuses on equitable practices in both industry and business. Roberts was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 9, 2007, in Pasadena, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| Identification: | A2007_201 |
| Language: | The interview and records are in English. |

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Management executive, psychology professor and "Little Rock Nine" member Dr. Terrence James Roberts was born on December 3, 1941 to William L. and Margaret G. Roberts. His father worked for the Veteran's Administration and his mother ran a catering service in Little Rock, Arkansas. Roberts attended Dunbar Junior High School in the early 1950s, and was only thirteen when the U.S. Supreme Court issued the "Brown v. Board of Education" decision to integrate schools.

Roberts had begun attending Horace Mann High School when, in 1955, Little Rock School System Superintendent Virgil Blossom submitted a plan to begin gradually integrating the public schools, a proposal the school board approved unanimously. Two years later, after an intensive selection process, the "Little Rock Nine," with Roberts among them, entered Central High School. After the white community rallied in support of segregation, Little Rock mayor Woodrow Mann asked President Eisenhower to send federal troops to enforce integration, and one day later, the President sent the 101st Airborne Division to Little Rock. Roberts endured conflicts and struggles throughout the 1957-1958 school year at Central High School. The following year, Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus and the state legislature closed the school as an attempt to oppose integration. As a result, Roberts moved to Los Angeles, California to live with his relatives, where he completed high school in 1959. In 1967, he received his B.S. degree in sociology, and then received his M.A. degree in social welfare from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1970. In 1976, he received his Ph.D. degree in psychology from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois. Roberts confronted Governor Faubus on ABC-TV's "Good Morning America" television program in 1979, where he argued that Faubus had violated the public trust in 1955 in Little Rock by pushing his segregationist policies. Roberts became the department chair of Antioch University Los Angeles' psychology program in 1994. In 1994, he again made an appearance on television when seven

members of the Little Rock Nine appeared on the "Oprah Winfrey Show," coming face to face with several Caucasian students who had tormented them.

In 1998, the Little Rock School District hired Roberts as their official desegregation consultant; to this day, Roberts provides similar services throughout the United States. The following year, President Clinton awarded Roberts the Congressional Gold Medal, the country's highest award for civilian contributions to society. Roberts is currently the chief executive officer of Terrence J. Roberts & Associates, a management consulting firm that focuses on equitable practices in both industry and business. He is married to Rita Roberts, Ph.D., and they have two daughters and two grandsons.

Terrence Roberts was interviewed by "The HistoryMakers" on July 9, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Terrence Roberts was conducted by Jacques Lesure on July 9, 2007, in Pasadena, California, and was recorded on 5 Betacam SP videocassettes. Management executive and psychology professor Terrence Roberts (1941 -) is a member of the "Little Rock Nine." He is currently the CEO of Terrence J. Roberts & Associates, a management consulting firm that focuses on equitable practices in both industry and business.

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:

Terrence Roberts

Lesure, Jacques (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Terrence Roberts--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Terrence J. Roberts & Associates

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

EducationMakers

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 Terrence Roberts, July 9, 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 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.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage, July 9, 2007

Video Oral History Interview with Terrence Roberts, Section A2007_201_001_001, TRT: 0:28:10
2007/07/09

Terrence Roberts begins the interview by discussing his childhood neighborhood in Little Rock, Arkansas. Due to the segregation in Little Rock most of the African American families lived in close proximity; creating a very close knit community. Roberts remembers being a good student at Gibbs Elementary with good manners and an amicable disposition. He discusses secondary education at Horace Mann High School, a school comprised entirely of African American students and staff. When Roberts traveled to downtown Little Rock as a child, he was confused and shocked by Jim Crow segregation. After finishing his freshman year at Horace Mann High School, the Arkansas school system attempted to integrate Central High School. In 1957, 150 blacks volunteered to integrate Central High School, only nine were chosen; Roberts was one of the chosen few.

African American childhood--Arkansas

African American families--Arkansas

African American Elementary School Students

African Americans--Segregation--Arkansas--Little Rock

Central High School (Little Rock, Ark.)--1950-1960.

African American neighborhoods--Arkansas--Little Rock

Video Oral History Interview with Terrence Roberts, Section A2007_201_001_002, TRT: 0:30:10
2007/07/09

Terrence Roberts describes in further detail his transition from Horace Mann High School to Central High School in 1957. A majority of the Caucasian students did not want the integration to occur. As a result the original 150 students who volunteered to integrate the school were reduced to nine. Roberts' motivation to integrate the high school was because he believed segregation was nonsense. He was surprised by the intensity of opposition towards integration he experienced. He recalls the sights and sounds he experienced on the first day he attempted to integrate the high school. On the first day of class, no African American students were able to enter the high school; entry did not occur until three weeks later when the students were escorted by the police. The 101st Air Borne Division was eventually called in to make sure the students got to and from school safely.

Central High School (Little Rock, Ark.)--Riots & demonstrations--1950-1960.

Segregation in education--Arkansas.

101st Airborne Division Association

Race riots--Arkansas

Race relations—Arkansas—Little Rock.

Video Oral History Interview with Terrence Roberts, Section A2007_201_001_003, TRT: 0:29:00
2007/07/09

Terrence Roberts discusses meeting with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Jim Lawson, Glen Smiley, and the rest of the "Little Rock Nine" to give support and advice. They all gathered in the home of Daisy Bates to discuss non violence tactics in 1957, before they entered Central High School. After the end

of their first year at Central High School, Governor Orval Faubus closed every school in Little Rock, Arkansas due to segregation issues. Due to the school closure, Roberts moved to Los Angeles, California to attend school there. He experienced racism at the Los Angeles school, regardless of the increase in diversity. After taking summer courses in sociology, Roberts decided to become a sociologist. Roberts discusses the various degrees he received from California State University Los Angeles, University of California Los Angeles, and Southern Illinois University. He discusses his appearance on "Good Morning America," in 1979 when he confronted Orval Faubus.

King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968

Nonviolence--Philosophy.

Faubus, Orval Eugene, 1910-1994

Segregation in education--Arkansas--Little Rock.

Central High School (Little Rock, Ark.)--1950-1960.

Racism in education--California--Los Angeles.

African American college students--California.

Desegregation in education--Arkansas--Little Rock.

Video Oral History Interview with Terrence Roberts, Section A2007_201_001_004, TRT: 0:29:20
2007/07/09

Terrence Roberts discusses his professional career from 1985 to 1994. He appeared on The Oprah Winfrey Show in 1996 with other members on the "Little Rock Nine," to discuss integrating Central High School. In 1998, Roberts accepted a position with the Little Rock Board of Education as the official desegregation consultant; he was released from this position in 2002. In 1999, President Bill Clinton awarded Roberts with the Congressional Gold Medal. Roberts is working on a manuscript about his experiences as one of the "Little Rock Nine." He believes that the time he spent at Horace Mann High School was a unique learning environment, where he learned about religion and the destructive nature of racism. Roberts discusses the relationship between science and spirituality in his life.

Oprah Winfrey show.

United States. Act to Present a Congressional Gold Medal to Terrence Roberts.

Racism in education--Arkansas--Little Rock.

Desegregation in education--Arkansas--Little Rock.

Video Oral History Interview with Terrence Roberts, Section A2007_201_001_005, TRT: 0:10:00
2007/07/09

Terrence Roberts narrates a collection of photographs.