

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Mannie Jackson

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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>	Jackson, Mannie L.
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Mannie Jackson,
<b>Dates:</b>	July 15, 2007
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2007
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:03:33).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Corporate executive and basketball team owner Mannie Jackson (1939 - ) owned the Harlem Globetrotters basketball team. Jackson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 15, 2007, in Phoenix, Arizona. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2007_210
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Basketball team owner and corporate executive Mannie Jackson was born on May 4, 1939 in Illmo, Missouri, to Emmett and Margaret Jackson. Jackson and his family moved to Edwardsville, Illinois, when he was three years old, where his father worked at an auto plant, and his mother and grandmother cleaned houses. In 1952, Jackson entered the newly integrated Edwardsville High School and later obtained a full scholarship to play basketball at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). During the course of Jackson's four years at UIUC, he and childhood friend Govoner Vaughn became the first African American basketball players to start for the university's varsity basketball team. Despite the racist atmosphere on the University of Illinois' campus, Jackson became the first African American All-American player and the captain of the Illini basketball team.

After graduating from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1960, with his B.S. degree in education, Jackson traveled to New York to try out for the National Basketball Association (NBA)'s New York Knicks. Although Jackson did not make the team, within the same year, he was accepted into the Harlem Globetrotters, where he played until 1964. Jackson left the Globetrotters and settled in Detroit, Michigan where he attended graduate school at the University of Detroit, and obtained his M.A. degree in marketing and economics in 1968. From there, Jackson launched his business career, becoming the director of labor relations for the Honeywell Corporation in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he worked for thirty years. Then, in 1986, Jackson co-founded The Executive Leadership Council and later became its president until 1992. In 1993, Jackson sought to invest money into the Harlem Globetrotters after the franchise reached a low fan base and sales, eventually becoming the owner and president of the team. His purchase of the Harlem Globetrotters made him the first African American to own a major international sports organization. Under Jackson's leadership, the Globetrotters' image was completely revamped, and the team amassed an impressive list of national sponsors, expanded the countries the team visited to 118 with attendance of over two million people annually, and topped the Sports Q ratings list as the most liked and recognized team in the world in 1999, 2000 and 2002.

For his work with the Harlem Globetrotters, as well as his impressive business history, Jackson has received

numerous awards, including "*Black Enterprise*" magazine's "Most Powerful Black Executives," the National Conference of Community and Justice's Humanitarian of the Year Award and the Effa Manley Sports Executive of the Year Award. From 1993 to 2007, Jackson served as the Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer for the Harlem Globetrotters. He is Chairman of Boxcar Holdings, LLC, and he serves on the Board of Directors of the Harlem Globetrotters and as a trustee of the University of Illinois Foundation. Jackson was recognized by the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts when the organization unveiled a new award named after him: Mannie Jackson Basketball's Human Spirit Award.

Mannie Jackson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on July 15, 2007.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Mannie Jackson was conducted by Jacques Lesure on July 15, 2007, in Phoenix, Arizona, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Corporate executive and basketball team owner Mannie Jackson (1939 - ) owned the Harlem Globetrotters basketball team.

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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:

Jackson, Mannie L.

Lesure, Jacques (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Jackson, Mannie L.--Interviews

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African American businesspeople--Interviews.

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African American basketball players--Interviews.

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African American executives--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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Harlem Globetrotters

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## **Occupations:**

Basketball Team Owner

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

SportsMakers

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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 Mannie Jackson, July 15, 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 5/30/2023 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

Video Oral History Interview with Mannie Jackson, Section A2007\_210\_001\_001, TRT: 0:28:10 ?

Mannie Jackson was born on May 4, 1939 in Illmo, Missouri to Margaret White Jackson and Emmett Jackson. His paternal great-grandfather was a horse breeder and trader, and owned land with a white business partner; but, after his partner's death, was denied his claim to the property. Jackson's paternal grandfather, Sylvester Jackson, worked at a steel mill in Edwardsville, Illinois, and was also the architect and builder of most homes in Edwardsville's black community. Jackson's maternal grandfather, Lonnie White, worked on the railroad in southern Missouri, where Jackson's mother grew up. Around the time of Jackson's birth, his father joined the U.S. Navy, and was deployed to the Pacific theater of World War II. Jackson's paternal grandfather then convinced his maternal family to join him in Edwardsville. The town was segregated at the time, and Jackson began his education at Edwardsville's all-black Lincoln School, a five-room schoolhouse where his paternal grandfather's second wife was a teacher.

African American families--Illinois--Edwardsville.

African American neighborhoods--Illinois.

African Americans--Baptists.

African American children--Education (Elementary)--Illinois.

Video Oral History Interview with Mannie Jackson, Section A2007\_210\_001\_002, TRT: 0:28:50 ?

Mannie Jackson began his education at the all-black Lincoln School in Edwardsville, Illinois. He went on to attend an integrated junior high school, where he became aware of the inequalities of segregated education; and, to catch up with his white peers, studied with his teachers on the weekends. Jackson and his classmate, Govoner Vaughn, also joined the school's basketball team, where they were lauded for their athletic ability. At thirteen years old, Jackson led the Edwardsville High School basketball team to the state championship game, and set the all-state scoring record. He also tended bar at a local country club, where he was known as a basketball star. After graduation, Jackson considered working there full time, but decided to enroll at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. There, he and Govoner Vaughn were the first black players on the varsity basketball team. During a game against the University of Kentucky, they were accosted with racial slurs, and escorted off the court by police.

African Americans--Education--Illinois--Edwardsville.

Segregation in education--Illinois.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign--Basketball.

Video Oral History Interview with Mannie Jackson, Section A2007\_210\_001\_003, TRT: 0:28:42 ?

Mannie Jackson played basketball for the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. During this time, he befriended Cassius Clay, who was later known

as Muhammad Ali; and Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, who influenced his political outlook. Reverend Jackson also introduced him to Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. After graduating, Jackson joined the corporate-sponsored National Industrial Basketball League. He played for the Technical Tape Corporation's New York Tuck Tapers, while also completing the company's management program. In 1962, Jackson joined the Harlem Globetrotters, and began touring internationally, where he met such notables as Ella Fitzgerald and Nikita Khrushchev. Jackson left the team in 1964 to pursue a career in business. He entered the master's program at the University of Detroit Mercy; and, before earning a degree, was hired to teach at the General Motors Institute. In 1986, Jackson moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota to join the staff of Honeywell International, Inc.

African Americans--Illinois--Urbana-Champaign--Social life and customs.

African American basketball players.

Harlem Globetrotters--History.

Video Oral History Interview with Mannie Jackson, Section A2007\_210\_001\_004, TRT: 0:28:01 ?

Mannie Jackson was the only African American executive in the aerospace and defense division of Honeywell International, Inc. After assisting in the acquisition of General Electric's computing division, he was assigned to manage a factory in Tampa, Florida; and then, in 1983, established the company's communications services business, which he operated successfully for five years. Jackson began acquiring small businesses; and, in 1993, purchased the bankrupt Harlem Globetrotters basketball team. Although he initially planned to shut down the team's operations and use only the brand and memorabilia, Jackson decided to capitalize on the team's history of athletic success, civic engagement and family oriented memories to rebuild the business. He prioritized financial transparency, and led the Harlem Globetrotters back into success. The team was inducted to the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 2002. Jackson reflects upon the legacy of the Harlem Globetrotters, and his advice to future generations.

African American businesspeople.

African American business enterprises.

Harlem Globetrotters.

National Basketball Association.

Video Oral History Interview with Mannie Jackson, Section A2007\_210\_001\_005, TRT: 0:09:50 ?

Mannie Jackson shares a message to future generations, as well as his advice to aspiring professional athletes. He also talks about the importance of the Women's National Basketball Association. Jackson concludes the interview by reflecting upon his life, legacy and how he would like to be remembered.

Athletics--Vocational guidance--United States.