Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dennis Terry

Overview of the Collection

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

Creator: Dennis Terry

Title: The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dennis Terry,

Dates: October 25, 2007

Bulk Dates: 2007

Physical Description: 6 Betacam SP videocassettes (2:44:38).

Abstract: Nonprofit executive and civic leader Dennis Terry (1944 - ) co-founded the Mid Bronx Senior Citizens Council and was a board member of the South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporations, an organization that sought to reverse the flight of jobs and business from the South Bronx. Terry was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 25, 2007, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.

Identification: A2007_303

Language: The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Nonprofit executive and civic leader Leon Terry was born on October 26, 1944 in Smithfield, North Carolina to Daisy May Smith and Kelly Terry, Jr. He grew up in the segregated South and experienced racial segregation and the overwhelming presence of the Ku Klux Klan. He attended North Carolina’s Lucille Elementary School, Buckingham Junior High School and Technical High School.

In 1964, Terry attended Howard University, where he majored in economics, was a member of the Howard University track team and was involved in Howard’s work study program. In addition to being active on campus, Terry also volunteered within the community. In 1968, Terry graduated from Howard University with his B.A. degree in economics.

After graduation Terry became the operations manager for the Long Island Lighting Company. In 1971, motivated by the concept of “diverse cultural groups coming together to produce the common good,” Terry and others founded the Mid Bronx Senior Citizens Council (MBSCC). The MBSCC was established as an advocacy group for the elderly focusing on the deteriorating areas of New York City’s South Bronx community.

In 1972, Terry became the chairman of the New York Urban League’s Bronx Borough Board and attended the National Black Political Convention held in Gary, Indiana. From 1976 until 1996, Terry was a board member of the South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation (SoBRO), a company that sought to reverse the flight of jobs and business from the South Bronx. Terry was also a board member of the Bronx Lebanon Hospital from 1981 to 1982.
Terry is retired and currently resides in the Bronx, New York.

Dennis Leon Terry was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on October 25, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dennis Terry was conducted by Adrienne Jones on October 25, 2007, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 6 Betacam SP videocassettes. Nonprofit executive and civic leader Dennis Terry (1944 - ) co-founded the Mid Bronx Senior Citizens Council and was a board member of the South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporations, an organization that sought to reverse the flight of jobs and business from the South Bronx.

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:

Terry, Dennis

Jones, Adrienne (Interviewer)

Burghela, Neculai (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Dennis Terry--Interviews
Organizations:

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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 Dennis Terry, October 25, 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 8/14/2011 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, October 25, 2007

Video Oral History Interview with Dennis Terry, Section A2007_303_001_001, TRT: 0:30:07 2007/10/25

Dennis Terry slates the interview and discusses his maternal lineage. He states that his mother, Daisy Smith, was born in Smithfield, North Carolina. Her mother, Julie, was a cook and a maid and Daisy's father seldom found employment. Terry remembers Daisy having a wonderful sense of humor and loving to read. Terry talks about growing up in the Washington Terrace housing...
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Video Oral History Interview with Dennis Terry, Section A2007_303_001_002, TRT: 0:30:08 2007/10/25

Dennis Terry reminisces about his childhood in the Washington Terrace housing project during the late 1940s and early 1950s, and compares the architecture to the adjacent Caucasian housing project. He states that the kids from the two projects often played together outside of school, and none of the parents seemed to have a problem with it. He remembers that the projects had social amenities like a library, playground, schools and a bus service. The availability of these kind of services sheltered the children of Washington Terrace from the racism and segregation of North Carolina. He discusses his educational experiences and his love for reading. He also remembers when he and his mother moved to Springfield, Illinois and he compared the racial and social climate of that town to Raleigh, North Carolina.

Segregation.
African American students--Education (Elementary).

Video Oral History Interview with Dennis Terry, Section A2007_303_001_003, TRT: 0:29:31 2007/10/25

Dennis Terry compares the two junior high schools he attended in Springfield, Illinois. He states that one of the junior high schools had a test that the students had to take, and their scores determined what type of course work they would take. He remembers that there were not many African American students at his junior high school, and even fewer African American teachers. He discusses the things he and his friends did in high school, and talks about the different summer camps for African American children in Springfield. Terry also recalls his first experiences at Howard University and the social awareness on the campus.

African Americans--Education (Secondary)--Illinois--Springfield.
Howard University--Students.
Student movements--Washington (D.C.)
African American college students--Political activity--Washington (D.C.)--History.

Video Oral History Interview with Dennis Terry, Section A2007_303_001_004, TRT: 0:29:42 2007/10/25

Dennis Terry talks about the different occupations he held while studying at Howard University. His senior year he worked for an electric company named Pepco, that employed an African American woman as an engineer. Terry feels that the experience he obtained at Pepco helped him obtain a job with the Long Island Lighting Company. In addition to the different occupations he held during his collegiate career, he also discussed the beginning of the Vietnam project in Raleigh, North Carolina. He recalls that his neighbors were from different economic classes, making it easy to see the various achievements of African Americans.

African American mothers.
Depressions--1929--United States.
African American fathers.
Public housing--United States--History--20th century.
War and the draft. Terry remembered the changing skyline in New York during the early 1970s and his involvement with the local chapters of the Urban League and Congress of Racial Equality in the Bronx.


Long Island Lighting Company.

College students--Employment--Washington (D.C.)


National Urban League.

Congress of Racial Equality.

Video Oral History Interview with Dennis Terry, Section A2007_303_001_005, TRT: 0:29:42 2007/10/25

Dennis Terry remembers how he met his wife at Howard University and talked about the various community organizations in the South Bronx of which he was a member. He recalls that the marginalization of African American students in neighborhood schools was a very big issue in his community during the late 1960s and through the 1970s, as Italian and African American families moved out of the South Bronx and more low-income Hispanic families moved in. He worked with the senior citizens in his community, and was able to establish different services, like a meals on wheels type of program and an adult care facility.

Voluntarism--United States.

African American couples.

Older people--Services for--New York (State)--New York.

Community development--New York (State)--New York.

Video Oral History Interview with Dennis Terry, Section A2007_303_001_006, TRT: 0:15:28 2007/10/25

Dennis Terry remembers when he attended the National Black Political Convention and the liberation movement during the 1970s. He states that the National Black Political Convention interested people who wanted to see a political change for African Americans. Terry also discussed some of the awards he received over the years, including the Congressional Record Award and the Living Legend Award. He also mentions his proposed community activism. He also takes time to narrate some family photographs that he brought to the interview.

Voluntarism--United States.

African Americans--Politics and government--20th century.