

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. William Finlayson

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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>	Finlayson, William, 1924-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dr. William Finlayson,
<b>Dates:</b>	November 18, 2008
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2008
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:18:50).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Bank chairman and obstetrician and gynecologist Dr. William Finlayson (1924 - ) established his own private practice in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1958, going on to found the first black-owned bank in Milwaukee, North Milwaukee State Bank. Finlayson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 18, 2008, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2008_135
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Obstetrician and gynecologist Dr. William Edward Finlayson was born on September 1, 1924 in Manatee, Florida. Finlayson served as a 1st Lieutenant in the United States Army from 1943 through 1946 and served in the Army Reserves from 1946 to 1953. He received his B.S. degree from Morehouse College in 1948 and his M.D. from Meharry Medical College in 1953. Finlayson completed his residency at the University of Minnesota in 1958.

After his residency ended, Finlayson established his own private practice in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1958. He continued to practice medicine for nearly the next forty years (from 1958 to 1997). Finlayson also held two fellowships: one at the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologist in 1963 and the other at the American College of Surgeons in 1964. He also taught at the Medical College of Wisconsin and the University of Wisconsin Medical School.

In 1971, Finlayson founded the first black-owned bank in Milwaukee: North Milwaukee State Bank. He also serves on the board of directors and is the bank's chairman. In founding the bank, Finlayson's mission was not profit based. Rather, he intended to add stature and viability to underserved communities by offering full-service banking to individuals and businesses. North Milwaukee State Bank's mission is to facilitate community development and economic growth, personal and business advancement, home ownership growth, and financial education.

Finlayson is a member of the Milwaukee Medical Society and a house delegate to the Wisconsin Medical Society. He is a past president of the Milwaukee Gynecological Society and serves on the board of directors of the Southeastern Wisconsin Health System Agency. Finlayson is also a former president of his local YMCA board. He is a member of the Urban League and a lifetime member of the NAACP.

Finlayson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on November 18, 2008.

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# Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dr. William Finlayson was conducted by Larry Crowe on November 18, 2008, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Bank chairman and obstetrician and gynecologist Dr. William Finlayson (1924 - ) established his own private practice in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1958, going on to found the first black-owned bank in Milwaukee, North Milwaukee State Bank.

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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:

Finlayson, William, 1924-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Finlayson, William, 1924- --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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### Occupations:

Obstetrician and Gynecologist

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### HistoryMakers® Category:

MedicalMakers

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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 Dr. William Finlayson, November 18, 2008. 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 Dr. William Finlayson, Section A2008\_135\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:56 ?

Dr. William Finlayson was born on September 1, 1924 in Manatee County, Florida to Alba Keys Finlayson and James Finlayson, Jr. Finlayson's maternal grandparents, William Keys and Emily Keys, lived in Madison, Florida, where his grandfather worked as a barber. Finlayson's mother completed several years of college, and became a teacher at Jones High School in Orlando, Florida. At

eighteen years old, she married Finlayson's father, a preacher who graduated from the Florida Baptist Institute and had three sons from a previous marriage. Finlayson grew up in Orlando, Florida, where he was raised alongside his three half-brothers and two sisters. Around 1938, Finlayson's father transferred to a congregation in Miami, Florida. While his father readied a home there, Finlayson lived for one year with his mother and siblings in Daytona Beach, Florida. There, he attended at Campbell High School, and became acquainted with noted educator Mary McLeod Bethune, who founded the local Bethune Cookman College.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. William Finlayson, Section A2008\_135\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:14 ?

Dr. William Finlayson grew up in Florida during the 1930s, when the South was strictly segregated. With the encouragement of his mother, teacher Alba Keys Finlayson, he graduated at sixteen years old from Booker T. Washington High School in Miami, Florida. In 1941, Finlayson enrolled at the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College for Negroes in Tallahassee. He also volunteered for the U.S. Army, and was called to duty at the end of his freshman year. At the start of his service, he taught literacy to black soldiers at Fort Benning, Georgia. Finlayson entered Officer Candidate School in 1944, and was promoted to second lieutenant upon graduating in 1945. He was stationed in Hawaii until his discharge in 1946, when he enrolled at Morehouse College during the tenure of President Benjamin Mays. His peers included Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King and historian Lerone Bennett, Jr. He studied accounting under Jesse B. Blayton Sr., who was the first African American certified public accountant in Georgia.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. William Finlayson, Section A2008\_135\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:06 ?

Dr. William Finlayson graduated in 1948 with a pre-medical degree from Morehouse College. While preparing to apply for medical school, Finlayson worked for one year as a dining car waiter on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad with his half-brother, Charles Finlayson. After passing the medical school admissions examination, Finlayson was accepted to Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee. There, his mentors included obstetrician Carr Treherne and surgeon Matthew Walker, Sr. Finlayson developed an interest in obstetrics and gynecology; and, in 1957, was accepted into a residency program under Dr. John McKelvey at the University of Minnesota Medical School in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Upon completing his gynecological training, Finlayson moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he joined a medical practice operated by black physicians. He passed the obstetric board examinations in 1958, and began practicing at Milwaukee's St. Joseph Hospital and Mt. Sinai Hospital, and at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. William Finlayson, Section A2008\_135\_001\_004, TRT: 0:28:58 ?

Dr. William Finlayson moved to work as gynecologist in Milwaukee, Wisconsin during the late 1950s. He attempted to purchase a lot in an all-white neighborhood, but was denied because of his race. During the late 1960s, he joined Father James Groppi and Vel Phillips' march against housing discrimination in Milwaukee. Finlayson went on to found the North Milwaukee State Bank, the city's first full service black bank, in 1971. He served as the second president of the bank's board, where he remained an active member until his retirement. Finlayson also founded Milwaukee's W.E.B. Du Bois Club, where he mentored high school students about financial skills and black history. Finlayson talks about his experiences of racial discrimination during his early

medical career, when black doctors were barred from treating white patients. In addition, he remembers the HIV/AIDS crisis of the early 1990s, and talks about the incidence of diabetes and uterine fibroids in the African American community.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. William Finlayson, Section A2008\_135\_001\_005, TRT: 0:21:36 ?

Dr. William Finlayson founded the W.E.B. Du Bois Club, which used the writings of its namesake historian and activist as a guiding philosophy. Through the organization, Finlayson taught financial literacy and black history to teenagers who were preparing to begin college. With Reverend Leon Sullivan, Finlayson traveled to Ghana, the final home of W.E.B. Du Bois, who became a Pan-Africanist in his later years. In addition to his work with the W.E.B. Du Bois Club, Finlayson was active with the YMCA, and belonged to a number of professional medical organizations. He served as president of the Cream City Medical Society in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and as the vice president of Milwaukee's United Community Services. Finlayson was also a member of the National Urban League. He shares his advice for aspiring black professionals, and concludes the interview by describing how he would like to be remembered.