

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Bob Carter

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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>	Carter, Robert "Bob" G, 1938-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Bob Carter,
<b>Dates:</b>	April 27, 2010
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2010
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:55:36).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Art professor Bob Carter (1938 - ) cofounded the National Drawing Association, and taught at the Nassau Community College in New York. Carter was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 27, 2010, in Dix Hills, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2010_002
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Robert Carter is a New York illustrator, painter, and art professor. Carter was born in Louisville, Kentucky, on March 29, 1938 to Robert and Sarah Carter. He graduated from Central High School in 1955 with an interest and talent for art. Continuing his education he received his B.S. degree from the University of Louisville in 1959 and his M.F.A. degree from the prestigious Pratt Institute of Fine Arts two years later. His first job was as an artist for WHAS-TV in Louisville where he painted scenery before being used as a set designer, fabricator, and finally as a floor director.

Following his time at WHAS-TV, Carter began doing freelance work for several publishing companies including McGraw Hill, D.C. Heath (now known as Houghton Mifflin), and Simon & Schuster where his illustrations were featured in children's books. Carter also started teaching at Nassau Community College in New York as a professor of art. He also lectured at public schools, universities, and private art organizations. In addition, Carter co-founded the National Drawing Association.

Carter's art has been featured numerous times from Dallas to New York City. These include his exhibit "Carter Light" at Adelphi University and at the 1st Annual Harlem Fine Arts Show, both in 2010. In 2008, Carter was inducted as a legend into the Hall of Fame at Central High School in Louisville, Kentucky. Carter was also honored as an outstanding artist at the 10th Annual Celebration of Black Artists by the dedicators in New York. His website, Robert Carter Studio, created in 2006, acts as a portfolio for his work.

His wife, Panchita, is a fine art jeweler and together they have two daughters, Heather and Holly.

Robert Carter was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 27, 2010.

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## **Scope and Content**

This life oral history interview with Bob Carter was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 27, 2010, in Dix Hills, New York, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Art professor Bob Carter (1938 - ) cofounded the National Drawing Association, and taught at the Nassau Community College in New York.

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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:

Carter, Robert "Bob" G, 1938-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Carter, Robert "Bob" G, 1938---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:

Art Professor

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

ArtMakers

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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 Bob Carter, April 27, 2010. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

### Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 2/5/2020 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 Bob Carter, Section  
A2010\_002\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:30 2010/04/27

Bob Carter was born on March 29, 1938 in Louisville, Kentucky to Sara Thomas Carter and Robert Carter. His paternal great-grandfather escaped from slavery, and took the surname of the riverboat captain who helped him flee. Carter's maternal grandfather, Graham Thomas, worked as a servant in a wealthy white household, which provided a good living for his family. After his death, Carter's grandmother, Birdie Simpson Thomas, was unable to maintain their property, and eventually bequeathed the remaining acreage to Carter's uncle, Richard Thomas. Carter's father also worked a servant, and lived in his employers' homes from a young age. Carter's parents met at the Lincoln Institute, a boarding high school in Lincoln Ridge, Kentucky. His father was close with the school president, Whitney Young, Sr. After Carter's parents married, his mother left school to raise their children. His parents shared domestic duties, and his mother later returned to school, graduating from Louisville Central High School in 1950.

Video Oral History Interview with Bob Carter, Section  
A2010\_002\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:00 2010/04/27

Bob Carter's father, Robert Carter, was drafted into World War II, and opted to join the U.S. Marine Corps. He served in the Pacific Theater, and was stationed in Guam. He later became the president of the Montford Point Marine Association, Inc. After leaving the U.S. military, Carter's father joined the Louisville Metro Police Department in Louisville, Kentucky. He was promoted to detective, and transitioned to deputy coroner after sustaining an injury. He was one of the first African Americans to hold that position. Carter began his education at the Paul Laurence Dunbar School in Louisville. After moving with his family to the Beecher Terrace housing project, he transferred to Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Elementary School, and then attended

Madison Street Junior High School. Carter graduated from Louisville Central High School in 1955. At the time, it was the city's only public high school for African Americans. Other notable alumni included Lenny Lyles, Muhammad Ali and Rahman Ali.

Video Oral History Interview with Bob Carter, Section  
A2010\_002\_001\_003, TRT: 0:31:00 2010/04/27

Bob Carter graduated in 1955 from Louisville Central High School in Louisville, Kentucky. He won a scholarship from the Scholastic Corporation, and also received a grant from the Hite Endowment to attend the University of Louisville. In the early 1950s, the university was desegregated and combined with the all-black Louisville Municipal College. At the time of Carter's enrollment, Charles H. Parrish, Jr. was the only African American professor retained from the merger. During his studies, Carter was mentored by art professor Mary Spencer Nay. She entered his artwork in regional exhibits, through which he garnered his first award. After graduation, Carter taught at Louisville Central High School. He also designed sets for Louisville's WHAS-TV programs, including 'Hayloft Hoedown.' In the late 1950s, Carter moved to New York City to earn an M.F.A. degree from the Pratt Institute. While there, Whitney Young helped Carter find work through a black employment agency.

Video Oral History Interview with Bob Carter, Section  
A2010\_002\_001\_004, TRT: 0:28:44 2010/04/27

Bob Carter was recruited to join the National Conference of Artists (NCA) by Eugenia Dunn, who attended the group's inaugural conference in 1959. Two years later, Carter attended the NCA meeting in Atlanta, Georgia. He completed his M.F.A. degree at the Pratt Institute in 1962. He attended the NCA conference at Howard University in 1963, but left the organization soon afterwards due to conflicts over the definition of black art. At this point, Carter talks about the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s, including the perspective of his friend, Sam Gilliam. Around this time, Carter became an adjunct professor at the Nassau Community College Carter in Garden City, New York. At the time of the interview, he was the art

department's most senior professor. Carter founded the National Drawing Association in 1982. Although not exclusively black, the organization was aligned with the movement to develop networks for African American professionals. Its prominent members included Helen Meyrowitz and Jeff Webb.

Video Oral History Interview with Bob Carter, Section  
A2010\_002\_001\_005, TRT: 0:33:25 2010/04/27

Bob Carter created the illustrations for the 'What Job for Me?' children's book series during his early career. In addition to his drawings, he also designed theater sets and a window display for the Waldorf Astoria in New York City. At this point, Carter describes the influence of music on his artwork, and reflects upon his career at the Nassau Community College in Garden City, New York. Carter began teaching there as an adjunct art professor, and became a full member of the department in 1968. Later in his career, Carter focused on exhibiting and teaching, although he was also illustrating a book written by the actor and singer Ralph Carter at the time of the interview. Carter describes his artistic philosophy, and reflects upon the development of his artistic practice. He also describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community. Carter concludes this part of the interview by reflecting upon his life, legacy and how he would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Bob Carter, Section  
A2010\_002\_001\_006, TRT: 0:22:57 2010/04/27

Bob Carter talks about his maternal grandfather's legacy, and concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.