

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Louis Jones

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Jones, Louis, 1946-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Louis Jones,
Dates:	May 27, 2010
Bulk Dates:	2010
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:07:48).
Abstract:	Architect and corporate chief executive Louis Jones (1946 -) was president of Louis Jones Enterprises, Inc. and served on the board of directors for the Black Contractors United. Jones was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 27, 2010, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2010_030
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Louis Jones is president of Louis Jones Enterprises, Inc. and serves on the Board of Directors for the Black Contractors United. He was born on July 1, 1946 in Hunstville, Alabama to Arthur and Alberta Jones. His father was a farmer and construction worker in the South, but when his family moved to Chicago his father became a baker with the A&P grocery chain factories. Jones attended Tilden Technical High School before earning his Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle in 1973. In 1969, Jones began working for Skidmore, Owings and Merrill architects. In 1973, Jones began working for McKee-Berger-Mansueto as a School Rehab Manager.

In 1975, Jones became a licensed architect and moved to San Francisco, where he worked for a private consulting firm. He moved back to Chicago three years later and began working for Schal Associates. Between 1978 and 1984, Schal Associates built the Avondale Center, Madison Plaza, the Chicago Tribune Printing Plant, and the Magnificent Mile. In 1984, Jones became president of Louis Jones Enterprises, Inc., specializing in engineering, construction, management, consulting, and architecture. The following year, Louis Jones Enterprises, Inc. was part of the \$1.7 billion renovation and expansion of O'Hare International Airport. The firm also was hired to work on Provident Hospital in 1990 and McCormick Place in 1997. In 2008, Jones' firm was hired to be part of the team to build the University of Illinois', the James Stukel Towers student housing complex.

Since 1986, Jones sat on the Board of Directors for Black Contractors United and was elected Chairman of the Board in 1998. He was also selected to serve on the Mayor of Chicago's Task Force for Minority & Women Business Development in 2005. Jones was a member of the Illinois Capital Development Board and has served as president pro tempore of the Illinois Department of Employment Security Advisory Board.

Louis Jones was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on May 27, 2010.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Louis Jones was conducted by Thomas Jefferson on May 27, 2010, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Architect and corporate chief executive Louis Jones (1946 -) was president of Louis Jones Enterprises, Inc. and served on the board of directors for the Black Contractors United.

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:

Jones, Louis, 1946-

Jefferson, Thomas (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Jones, Louis, 1946- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

McKee-Berger-Mansueto

Louis Jones Enterprises

Occupations:

Architect

Corporate Chief Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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 Louis Jones, May 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 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).

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

Video Oral History Interview with Louis Jones, Section A2010_030_001_001, TRT: 0:29:19 ?

Louis Jones was born on July 1, 1946 in Huntsville, Alabama to Alberta Moore

Jones and Arthur Jones. Both sides of Jones' family had roots in Huntsville, where his maternal grandparents, Ruby Moore and World War I veteran Sylvester Moore, worked as sharecroppers and raised eleven children, including Jones' mother. Jones' paternal grandparents, Mary Burwell Jones and James Jones, owned a farm in Huntsville. His paternal grandfather was also known in the community as a master bricklayer, and often repaired fireplace chimneys and water wells that were incorrectly built. When Jones was four years old, his father moved to Chicago, Illinois, and sent for the rest of the family after securing a position in a baking factory owned by The Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company. Jones and his family initially lived with cousins on Chicago's South Side, and later moved to an apartment in the integrated Hyde Park neighborhood.

African American families--Alabama--Huntsville.

African Americans--Alabama--Huntsville.

Southern States--Economic conditions--20th century.

Sharecropping--Southern States.

Bricklayers.

African American fathers.

Video Oral History Interview with Louis Jones, Section A2010_030_001_002, TRT: 0:28:17 ?

Louis Jones grew up on the South Side of Chicago, Illinois during the 1950s. After witnessing a stabbing near the family home at 51st Street and State Street, Jones moved with his parents and three younger siblings to an apartment in Hyde Park. There, Jones attended Bret Harte Elementary School, where he served as the safety patrol's air raid warden and fire marshal. He was one of the school's few African American students, and befriended his white classmates, although he struggled to participate in their preferred activities, like swimming and skating. Jones spent his free time at the Hyde Park YMCA, and often entered drawing contests, through which he won lessons at the Art Institute of Chicago. He went on to attend Tilden Technical High School, where he joined the football team and the Reserve Officers' Training Corps. He also worked part time as an usher at the Regal Theater, where he met some of the performers from the 'Motortown Revue,' including singer Smokey Robinson.

African American children--Illinois--Chicago.

African American students--Education (Elementary)--Illinois--Chicago.

African American high school students--Illinois--Chicago.

African American churches--Illinois--Chicago.

Neighborhoods--Illinois--Chicago.

United States. Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps.

Video Oral History Interview with Louis Jones, Section A2010_030_001_003, TRT: 0:29:05 ?

Louis Jones attended Tilden Technical High School in Chicago, Illinois. During this time, he worked as an usher at Chicago's Regal Theater, where he met singer Chuck Jackson and other performers from the 'Motortown Revue.' Upon graduation, Jones was advised by his high school counselor to pursue a career in architecture, as it combined his interests in drawing and the industrial arts. After graduating in 1964, Jones matriculated at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle (UICC), where he studied architecture under Raymond Dalton, Edward Deam and Andrew Heard. At the time, the architecture program at UICC included seven African American students, many of whom graduated alongside Jones at Tilden Technical High School. While in school, Jones worked at the architectural firm of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill LLP, which was one of the

few firms hiring black architects during the 1960s. After graduating, he secured a position at McKee Berger Mansueto, Inc., a construction management firm in Chicago.

African American high school students.

African American students--Education (Higher).

University of Illinois at Chicago.

African American architects--Employment.

Architectural practice--United States.

Robinson, Smokey, 1940-.

Video Oral History Interview with Louis Jones, Section A2010_030_001_004, TRT: 0:29:41 ?

Louis Jones joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) while enrolled at the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle. Through SNCC, Jones organized lectures by activists from the Black Panther Party, and protested against police actions during the Selma to Montgomery March. Jones was also a member of the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity and the college fencing team. Outside of school, he worked at the architectural firm of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill LLP, where he assisted with the drafting of the Sears Tower and Chicago's elevated train stations. After graduating, Jones was hired as a project manager at the construction management firm of McKee Berger Mansueto, Inc., where he oversaw the planning and execution of the firm's developments. He was then promoted to manage the large scale rehabilitation of the Chicago Public Schools. From there, Jones worked for a firm in San Francisco, California and Schal Associates, Inc. in Chicago, and went on to found Louis Jones Enterprises, Inc.

African American architects--Employment.

University of Illinois at Chicago.

Architectural practice--United States.

McKee-Berger-Mansueto.

Fencing.

African American couples.

African American business enterprises--Illinois--Chicago.

Construction industry--Illinois--Chicago.

Video Oral History Interview with Louis Jones, Section A2010_030_001_005, TRT: 0:29:34 ?

Louis Jones founded Louis Jones Enterprises, Inc., construction management firm in Chicago, Illinois, during the early 1980s. The firm managed large scale projects throughout the city, including the expansion of the Chicago O'Hare International Airport under the O'Hare Development Program, and a phase III engineering project for the Illinois Department of Transportation. Jones' firm also won contracts to manage the redevelopment of the Provident Hospital of Cook County and the Near South Health Clinic of Cook County. In the 1990s, Louis Jones Enterprises, Inc. partnered with the SEBUS Group, and won two international design competitions for the construction of Chicago's Harold Washington Library and McCormick Place South Building. During this time, Jones was a member of the National Organization of Minority Architects and the Black Contractors United, through which he worked with the Rainbow PUSH Coalition to secure opportunities for minority contractors in Chicago and Detroit, Michigan.

African American business enterprises--Illinois--Chicago.

Architectural practice--United States.

African American architects--Employment.

African American architects--Illinois--Chicago.

African American families--Illinois--Chicago.

African American children--Illinois--Chicago.

Video Oral History Interview with Louis Jones, Section A2010_030_001_006, TRT: 0:29:24 ?

Louis Jones managed the construction of numerous institutions in Chicago, Illinois, including the McCormick Place South Building and the Hyatt Regency McCormick Place. He also designed a facility for the Muntu Dance Theatre of Chicago, which was not completed due to a lack of funding. At the time of the interview, Louis Jones Enterprises, Inc. had contracts for the reconstruction of Wacker Drive and the St. Bernard Hospital and Health Care Center; and, as a member of the Airport Contracting Group, engaged in ongoing work at the Chicago O'Hare International Airport. Jones' firm also supervised the construction of Chicago's ACE Technical Charter High School and Colin Powell Middle School in Matteson, Illinois, which was the first institution to be named for statesman Colin L. Powell. Jones talks about how security concerns in the wake of September 11, 2001 affected the design of hospitals and other institutions. He also reflects upon his legacy and how he would like to be remembered.

Architectural practice--United States.

African American architects.

African American business enterprises--Illinois--Chicago.

Video Oral History Interview with Louis Jones, Section A2010_030_001_007, TRT: 0:12:28 ?

Louis Jones narrates his photographs.