

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Rodney Reed

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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>	Reed, Rodney J.
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Rodney Reed,
<b>Dates:</b>	March 8, 2011
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2011
<b>Physical Description:</b>	9 uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:29:54).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Educator Rodney Reed (1932 - ) served on the faculty of the University of California, Berkeley Graduate School of Education, and as dean of the Pennsylvania State University College of Education. In 2010 he was elected as Grand Sire Archon of the Boule. Reed was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 8, 2011, in Oakland, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2011_002
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Educator Rodney Reed was born on May 16, 1932 in New Orleans, Louisiana to Ursul and Edgar Reed. He received his B.A. degree from Clark College in 1951, and his M.Mus. degree in music education from the University of Michigan in 1956.

Upon graduation, he accepted a position at Southern University as an assistant professor of music and associate conductor of University bands. In 1961, Reed

moved to Oakland, California, where he served as a junior high school music teacher and department head and principal of the summer music recreation program in the Oakland Unified School District before becoming Vice Principal of King Junior High School.

Reed graduated from the University of California, Berkeley in 1970 with his Ph.D. degree in educational policy, planning, and administration. He then joined the faculty of the University's Graduate School of Education, becoming only the second tenure track professorial appointment in the school's history at that time, and ascended the ranks to become a full professor. In 1973, Reed was appointed as assistant research educator, Program in International Education Finance, during which time he conducted studies in Liberia, West Africa. In 1976, he was appointed as chair of the division of education administration in the school of education, and in 1989, was elected for a three year term as chair of the university's Graduate School of Education faculty.

While at Berkeley, Reed served on two Academic Senate Committees; was a co-founder of the University's Professional Development Program; was an initial member of the Board of Directors of the Young Musicians Program; co-director of the University of California/Oakland Unified School District Teacher Corps Project; and founded the University's Annual Institute for School Administrators.

In January, 1990, he assumed the position of Pennsylvania Professor of Education and Dean of The College of Education at Pennsylvania State University and became that University's first black senior academic administrator. While at Penn State, he was elected to serve a two-year term as chair of the academic council of deans. In 1994 he officially resigned from the University of California, Berkeley and was named professor emeritus. In 1998 he retired as dean of Penn State and was awarded the title of dean and professor emeritus, College of education.

Reed has published numerous articles examining the education system in America and has served on the editorial boards of a number scholarly journals. From 1991 to 1994 he was host of the television program, *Touching the Future*. He has served in leadership positions in the American Educational Research Association, and on the board of directors of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, the San Francisco-Bay Area Urban League, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals. He was also a member of the Pennsylvania Governor's "Pennsylvania 2000" board to chart the future of education in that state.

He has received many awards including resolutions from the California Assembly and the California Senate, the State of California Speaker of the Assembly Willie

J. Brown Jr. plaque for his service to the educational system of California, and the 1992 Alumnus of the Year Award from the Black Alumni club of the California Alumni Association. In addition, The Rodney J. and Vernell A. Reed scholarship in urban education has been established in the Pennsylvania State University College of Education.

Reed is married to Vernell Auzenne Reed. They have two adult children: Karen and Ursula. Rodney Reed was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 8, 2011.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Rodney Reed was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 8, 2011, in Oakland, California, and was recorded on 9 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Educator Rodney Reed (1932 - ) served on the faculty of the University of California, Berkeley Graduate School of Education, and as dean of the Pennsylvania State University College of Education. In 2010 he was elected as Grand Sire Archon of the Boule.

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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:

Reed, Rodney J.

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Reed, Rodney J.--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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University of California, Berkeley

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## Occupations:

Educator

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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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 Rodney Reed, March 8, 2011. 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 Rodney Reed, Section  
A2011\_002\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:45 2011/03/08

Rodney Reed was born on May 16, 1932 in New Orleans, Louisiana to Ursul Desvignes Reed and Edgar Reed. His

paternal grandfather worked as a longshoreman in New Orleans, where Reed's father was born in the early 1900s. He had four siblings, including two sisters who taught in New Orleans. Reed's father began practicing as a pharmacist in New Iberia, Louisiana; and, after marrying Reed's mother, joined the staff of Guichard's Pharmacy and Flint-Goodridge Hospital in New Orleans. He was active with the Masons, the Original Illinois Club and Chi Delta Mu, which was a fraternity for healthcare professionals. He also studied theology at the University of Oxford in England. Reed's mother was born in 1910 in New Orleans, and had Creole ancestry. Her mother was a housewife, and her father worked as a Pullman porter. She attended the Straight Business School in New Orleans, and raised five children, of whom Reed was the oldest. His brother, Langston Reed, practiced pharmacy and dentistry in New Orleans.

Video Oral History Interview with Rodney Reed, Section  
A2011\_002\_001\_002, TRT: 0:30:16 2011/03/08

Rodney Reed grew up in New Orleans, Louisiana. His family initially lived in New Orleans' 7th Ward, and later moved to the Lafitte Projects in the Treme neighborhood of the 6th Ward, near the location of Dooky Chase's Restaurant. Reed began his education at Joseph A. Craig Elementary School. While a student there, he learned to play the saxophone, and performed solo at churches and other small venues. He was also influenced by his paternal aunt, Louise Reed, who worked as a teacher in New Orleans. Reed went on to attend Gilbert Academy, a private Catholic high school on St. Charles Avenue. There, Principal Margaret Davis Bowen lent him a clarinet, which he played in the band under the direction of T. Leroy Davis. Reed also received encouragement from his math teacher, Aaron Dutton. At this point in the interview, Reed remembers his yearning to travel outside of New Orleans.

Video Oral History Interview with Rodney Reed, Section  
A2011\_002\_001\_003, TRT: 0:31:17 2011/03/08

Rodney Reed attended high school at the Gilbert Academy in New Orleans, Louisiana, where he was involved in football, photography and music. Heeding the advice of

his church minister, Reed then matriculated at Clark College in Atlanta, Georgia in 1947. He decided to major in music, but was disappointed by the absence of instrument specialists on the faculty. He also pledged to the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. Upon graduating in 1951, Reed studied for one year at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where he worked as a busser in the student union. He then enlisted in the U.S. Army, and was assigned to a music unit at Fort Jackson in Columbia, South Carolina. He played alongside notable musicians like bassist George Joyner, who went on to perform with pianist Ahmad Jamal; and trumpeter Louis Smith, who later joined the band of pianist Horace Silver. Following his discharge, Reed returned to the University of Michigan with funding from the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944.

Video Oral History Interview with Rodney Reed, Section  
A2011\_002\_001\_004, TRT: 0:31:39 2011/03/08

Rodney Reed earned a master's degree in education from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in 1956. While living in Ann Arbor, he frequented the music venues of Detroit, Michigan, where he heard musicians like Elvin Jones, Thad Jones and Hank Jones at the Blue Bird Inn. He also played clarinet in the University of Michigan Marching Band, which performed at the Big Ten Conference sporting events. After graduating, Reed was hired at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He served as assistant director of the university bands, which were led by his former high school band director, T. Leroy Davis. In his role as assistant director, Reed provided instruction to the woodwind and percussion sections, and helped develop the sound and style of the Southern University Marching Band using techniques that he learned at the University of Michigan. In addition, Reed talks about the location of Southern University in Baton Rouge, and the student demonstrations of the early 1960s.

Video Oral History Interview with Rodney Reed, Section  
A2011\_002\_001\_005, TRT: 0:30:39 2011/03/08

Rodney Reed served as the assistant band director at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana from 1956

to 1961. Around this time, he met his wife, Vernell A. Reed, who was a student at Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans. After the couple married, they moved to Oakland, California, where Reed was hired to work in the Oakland Unified School District at Havenscourt Junior High School. During his early teaching career, Reed was active in the music community of the San Francisco Bay Area, where he formed a dance band called the Ambassadors. After obtaining an administrative credential, Reed became the vice principal of King Estates Junior High School in Oakland. He was offered a principal position, but followed the advice of education professor Glen Grant and pursued a doctoral degree in education at the University of California, Berkeley Graduate School of Education. Upon his graduation in 1970, he was hired as a faculty member.

Video Oral History Interview with Rodney Reed, Section  
A2011\_002\_001\_006, TRT: 0:32:37 2011/03/08

Rodney Reed completed a doctoral degree at the University of California, Berkeley Graduate School of Education, where he researched the relationship between out of school educational opportunities and ethnicity. With support from professors like Staten Wentford Webster, William A. Shack and Troy Duster, Reed then joined the faculty of the Graduate School of Education. During his tenure, he helped found the Professional Development Program and the Institute for School Administrators. He also conducted research on peer tutoring programs through the university's Center for Studies in Higher Education. In 1980, Reed was appointed as the faculty assistant to the chancellor. A decade later, he was approached by the faculty of the College of Education at Pennsylvania State University to apply for the school's deanship. After accepting the position, Reed gradually transitioned to professor emeritus status at the University of California, Berkeley. He also remembers the Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989.

Video Oral History Interview with Rodney Reed, Section  
A2011\_002\_001\_007, TRT: 0:30:56 2011/03/08

Rodney Reed became a professor emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley Graduate School of

Education in 1993. From that time, he focused on his career as dean of the College of Education at Pennsylvania State University in University Park, Pennsylvania. In this role, he diversified the faculty and implemented a successful urban education program. He also served on the university's budget committee and the Council of Academic Deans. At this point in the interview, Reed talks about his academic research on subjects like educational opportunity and social justice. He also conducted educational finance studies in Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Liberia, where he met friends who helped develop his art collection. During his tenure as dean, he gave a series of lectures at the University of Khartoum in Sudan. At the time of the interview, Reed was serving as the grand sire archon of the Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity, where he helped develop the Boule Scholars Program.

Video Oral History Interview with Rodney Reed, Section  
A2011\_002\_001\_008, TRT: 0:27:58 2011/03/08

Rodney Reed served as the grand sire archon of the Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity, an African American social organization whose membership included such notable figures as Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Dr. Charles R. Drew, chemist Percy Lavon Julian, Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson and historian John Hope Franklin. Reed also designed the music display at the Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco, California in collaboration with Olly Wilson, who taught music at the University of California, Berkeley. At this point in the interview, Reed talks about his family, including his wife, Vernell A. Reed; daughters, Karen Reed and Ursula Reed; and grandson. He also reflects upon his life and legacy, his hopes and concerns for the African American community and how he would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Rodney Reed, Section  
A2011\_002\_001\_009, TRT: 0:24:47 2011/03/08

Rodney Reed hosted a television program called 'Touching the Future: Dialogues on Education' during his tenure as dean of the College of Education at Pennsylvania State University. The show was broadcast by WPSX-TV in Clearfield, Pennsylvania, and addressed topics like the role of the government in education and the methods of

motivating students. It also included interviews with notable educators like Professor Linda Darling-Hammond and Professor Harold L. Hodgkinson. Reed concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.