



# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Harry Edwards

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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>	Harry Edwards
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Harry Edwards,
<b>Dates:</b>	March 6, 2011
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2011
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 Betacam SP videocassettes (3:12:20).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Sociology professor and civic activist Harry Edwards (1942 - ) is known for his contributions to the study of the sociology of sport, his role as a consultant for professional sports teams, and his involvement in the 1968 Olympics Black Power salute in Mexico City. Edwards was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 6, 2011, in Santa Clara, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2011_008
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Sociology professor and civic activist Harry Edwards was born in 1942 in East St. Louis, Illinois to Harry and Adelaide Edwards. Edwards grew up in East St. Louis, Illinois as the second child in a family of eight children. He attended East St. Louis Senior High School where he excelled in sports. After graduating from high school in 1960, Edwards moved to California where he attended Fresno City College. Edwards then transferred to San Jose State University where he majored in sociology and graduated summa cum laude with his B.A. degree in sociology in 1964. In 1966, Edwards went on to receive his M.A. degree in sociology from Cornell University where he was awarded the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship. In 1970, he received his Ph.D. degree in sociology from Cornell University where he helped to found United Black Students for Action and the Olympic Project for Human Rights.

Due to his negative experiences as a student athlete on predominately white university campuses, Edwards became heavily involved in exposing the relationship between race and sports in society. By the late 1960s, Edwards began actively organizing protests and demonstrations like the 1968 Olympics Black Power salute at Mexico City involving John Carlos, Peter Norman and Tommie Smith. In 1970, Edwards was hired at the University of California, Berkeley where he taught courses on race relations, the sociology of sport and the family. In 1985, he was hired as a consultant for the San Francisco 49ers and developed the Minority Coaches Internship and Outreach Program with Coach Bill Walsh. Two years later, Edwards became special assistant to the Commissioner of Major League Baseball to help increase representation of minorities and women in baseball. From 1987 through 1995, Edwards worked with the Golden State Warriors of the National Basketball Association, specializing in player personnel counseling and programs. The programs and methods he developed for dealing with challenges facing professional football players were adopted by the entire National Football

League in 1992 and in 2000, he retired from the University of California, Berkeley.

Edwards has written extensively on the connections between race, sport and society. He is the author of "The Struggle That Must Be: An Autobiography," "The Sociology of Sports," "The Revolt of the Black Athlete," and countless articles on race, sports, and the sociology of sport in books, academic and popular press. Considered a leading authority on the sociology of sports and diversity, Edwards has appeared on nationally syndicated television shows and documentaries while traveling extensively to perform public engagements. He has been the recipient of several awards and honorary doctorate degrees.

Harry Edwards was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on March 6, 2011.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Harry Edwards was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 6, 2011, in Santa Clara, California, and was recorded on 6 Betacam SP videocassettes. Sociology professor and civic activist Harry Edwards (1942 - ) is known for his contributions to the study of the sociology of sport, his role as a consultant for professional sports teams, and his involvement in the 1968 Olympics Black Power salute in Mexico City.

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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:

Edwards, Harry

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Edwards, Harry--Interviews

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African American sociologists--Interviews

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African American educators--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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Olympic Project for Human Rights

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University of California, Berkeley

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Olympic Project for Human Rights

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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CivicMakers

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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 Harry Edwards, March 6, 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 8/16/2011 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

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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, March 6, 2011

Video Oral History Interview with Harry Edwards, Section A2011\_008\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:04  
2011/03/06

Harry Edwards slates his interview, after which Edwards responds to questions regarding his favorites. He then begins to discuss his family background, starting with his mother's family, including his maternal grandparents Gertrude and Hiram Cruise. Edwards talks about his father's upbringing, his parents Iola Baskin and Harold Barksdale and his father's time in prison. Edwards also discusses the development of his relationship with his father.

African American families--Illinois--East St. Louis

Prisons--United States

Edwards, Harry, 1942-

Video Oral History Interview with Harry Edwards, Section A2011\_008\_001\_002, TRT: 0:34:55  
2011/03/06

Harry Edwards discusses how his parents met, his family and community, legitimizing identification among African Americans and his early education. Upon his release from state prison, Harry, Sr. moved to East St. Louis, Illinois where he changed his last name from Barksdale to Edwards. The change was easy to accomplish, and because identification was not considered important for African Americans, the name change gave Edwards' father a clean slate. Harry, Sr. met Adelaide Cruise at a dance in East St. Louis when she was sixteen and he was around twenty-eight years old, marrying shortly thereafter. Harry, Sr. and Adelaide had eight children. The Edwards family lived in a tightly knit community on the south side of East St. Louis, where Edwards attended elementary school and junior high school. After the Brown v. Board of Education decision, Edwards was in the first mass integration of East St. Louis High School.

African American families--Illinois--East St. Louis

School integration--Illinois--East St. Louis

African American prisoners--Social conditions

African Americans--Race identity

East St. Louis (Ill.)

Edwards, Harry, 1942-

Video Oral History Interview with Harry Edwards, Section A2011\_008\_001\_003, TRT: 0:31:47  
2011/03/06

Harry Edwards discusses politics in East St. Louis during the 1950s. At that time, voting black residents were well paid for their votes. Edwards' father was a precinct committeeman for the Democratic Party, and was given money to help persuade voters in local and state elections. His father always discussed books and Edwards describes reading as the primary source of entertainment in his home during the winter. While reading was a major influence in Edwards' life, his mother did not share his father's love of books. A lack of access to many basic needs and poverty eventually led to the splitting of Edwards' family. Although his family was now separated, Edwards remained with his father and was mentored by attorney Frank Summers who acted as a moral compass and guide for him.

Politics--Illinois--East St. Louis

United States--Voting Rights

Democratic Party (U.S.)

Elections--Illinois--East St. Louis

African American parents--Divorce--Illinois--East St. Louis

Reading and books

Edwards, Harry, 1942-

Video Oral History Interview with Harry Edwards, Section A2011\_008\_001\_004, TRT: 0:31:03  
2011/03/06

Harry Edwards discusses school segregation. Before the Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka, Kansas Supreme Court decision to desegregate schools, Edwards' education began at the all black Dunbar Elementary School in his neighborhood. However, after the schools began to integrate, Edwards was a part of the first mass integration of East St. Louis High School. Edwards discusses how prior to junior high school at Hughes-Quinn Junior High, he was unaware of whites and the broader world outside of his community. Once in high school, Edwards had a hard time interacting with white students, but recognizes sports as being the catalyst in making it easier. While in high school, Edwards was also forced to come to terms with his father's limitations, after seeing a photo of Emmett Till in his coffin. Edwards cites this as the beginning of his break from his father.

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka

School integration--Illinois--East St. Louis

Segregation in education

African American education

Till, Emmett,--1941-1955

Education, (Secondary)--Illinois--East St. Louis

Edwards, Harry, 1942-

Video Oral History Interview with Harry Edwards, Section A2011\_008\_001\_005, TRT: 0:31:49  
2011/03/06

Harry Edwards discusses being a student athlete. In this section of the interview, he describes the lack of academic rigor required of athletes and African American students at the newly integrated East St. Louis High School. Edwards talks about the tensions that often arose while attending an integrated school, such as interracial dating and occasional racism from white students. In 1960, Edwards' mentor Frank Summers encouraged him to go to the University of Southern California to explore college options. Arrangements were made for Edwards to attend Fresno City College for a year, allowing for a transfer into a four year institution upon successful completion of basic courses. After

competing in junior college sports for a semester, Edwards decided to contact San Jose State University, who offered him admission under a basketball scholarship.

High school athletes--Illinois--East St. Louis

African American students

School integration--Illinois--East St. Louis

Racism--Education (Secondary)

Interracial dating--Illinois--East St. Louis

San Jose State University

Fresno City College

Edwards, Harry, 1942-

Video Oral History Interview with Harry Edwards, Section A2011\_008\_001\_006, TRT: 0:32:42  
2011/03/06

Harry Edwards entered San Jose State University in 1960, when student athletes had three options for study: probation and parole, social welfare, or physical education. Edwards discusses petitioning to major in sociology, noting that he was the only African American student and athlete in the sociology department. Upon graduating with honors from San Jose State, Edwards was approached by the National Football League as a prospect for the NFL Draft. However, Edwards decided that he wished to pursue a graduate degree in sociology rather than enter the draft. To the dismay of his father, Edwards attended Cornell University for both his M.A. and PhD degrees in sociology, publishing two books "The Revolt of the Black Athlete" and "The Struggle That Must Be," along with twenty-eight articles and a dissertation called, "The Sociology of Sport." Later, Edwards joined the NFL and won four Super Bowl rings during his professional career.

San Jose State University

Athletes--Education--United States

Cornell University. Graduate School

National Football League Championship Game

African American sociologists

Edwards, Harry, 1942-