

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Kevin Kornegay

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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>	Kornegay, Kevin T, 1959-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Kevin Kornegay,
<b>Dates:</b>	April 15, 2011
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2011
<b>Physical Description:</b>	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:05:43).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Engineering professor and electrical engineer Kevin Kornegay (1959 - ) became the Motorola Foundation Professor at Georgia Institute of Technology in 2006. His work has focused on high-speed data transport. Kornegay was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 15, 2011, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2011_018
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Electrical engineer and engineering professor Kevin Kornegay was born on March 24, 1959, in Brooklyn, New York to Dorothy and Thomas Kornegay. Kornegay was one of five children in the family. He attended the Pratt Institute where he graduated with his B.S. degree in electrical engineering in 1985. During college, Kornegay held a summer internship at AT&T Bell Laboratories, where he worked for a year before going to the University of California, Berkeley, where he received his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in electrical engineering and computer science in 1990 and 1992. In 1992, Kornegay wrote the chapter, "Chip and Board

Testing," in, "Anatomy of a Silicon Compiler." Between 1998 and 2009, Kornegay was issued six U.S. patents for his work.

Kornegay became an assistant professor in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Purdue University in 1994. In 1997, Kornegay was the Dr. Martin L. King visiting Professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. From 1998 to 2005, he served as an assistant and associate professor at Cornell University. In 2006, Kornegay joined the faculty of the Georgia Institute of Technology and became the Motorola Foundation Professor in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering. His research focused on computer chips and systems that make high-speed data transport possible through air, wire or optical fibers.

In 2002, U.S. Black Engineer Magazine named Kornegay the Black Engineer of the Year and he was featured in, "Science Spectrum." and "U.S. Black Engineer & Information Technology." as one of the 50 Most Important Blacks in Research Science in 2004. In 2005, the National Society of Black Engineers bestowed Kornegay its Golden Torch Award for Educator of the Year.

He lives in Georgia and has two sons, Kevin Jr. and Justin.

Kornegay was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 15, 2011.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Kevin Kornegay was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 15, 2011, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Engineering professor and electrical engineer Kevin Kornegay (1959 - ) became the Motorola Foundation Professor at Georgia Institute of Technology in 2006. His work has focused on high-speed data transport.

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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:

Kornegay, Kevin T, 1959-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Kornegay, Kevin T, 1959---Interviews

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African American scientists--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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Georgia Institute of Technology

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## **Occupations:**

Engineering Professor

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Electrical Engineer

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

EducationMakers|ScienceMakers

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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 Kevin Kornegay, April 15, 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

## 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 Kevin Kornegay, Section  
A2011\_018\_001\_001, TRT: 1:29:25 2011/04/15

Kevin Kornegay slates his interview and shares his favorites. His mother, Dorothy Lattie Scott, was born in 1928 in Mobile, Alabama, and her family moved to New York when she was very young. She was pregnant and married before she completed high school, but later became an elementary school teacher. Kornegay's father, Thomas Earl Kornegay, Sr., was born in 1925 in Mount Olive, North Carolina. After the deaths of his parents, Kornegay, Sr., was responsible for raising his nine younger siblings. Kornegay, Sr., worked for the New York City Transit Authority and died in 1987. Kevin Kornegay was the fourth of five children. He recalls his childhood neighborhood in Springfield Gardens, New York, a predominantly African American middle class community. Kornegay remembers the smell of his mother's cooking and visiting his paternal grandfather's grave with his family.

Electrical engineering.

African Americans--New York (State)--New York.

African American families--New York (State)--New York.

African American children--New York (State)--New York.

Video Oral History Interview with Kevin Kornegay, Section  
A2011\_018\_001\_002, TRT: 2:26:37 2011/04/15

Kevin Kornegay recalls his early interest in science and

reading. After battling a bout of rheumatic fever for a year, Kornegay returned to school and skipped the eighth grade. He attended P.S. 80 and then Junior High School 72 near his neighborhood. Kornegay remembers that his schools were fairly mixed early on, but as he progressed through school, the student body became predominantly black. Kornegay recalls that his mother taught at his elementary and middle schools. In high school, Kornegay pursued his interest in science on the honors academic track. During high school, Kornegay played receiver on the football team, participated in the school jazz band, and participated with the group that was the statewide semifinalist in the Westinghouse Science Talent Program.

New York City Public Schools.

Westinghouse Science Talent Search.

African Americans--Education--New York (State)--New York.

Video Oral History Interview with Kevin Kornegay, Section A2011\_018\_001\_003, TRT: 3:29:45 2011/04/15

Kevin Kornegay describes his decision to become an electrical engineer after spending a summer as an intern at AT&T Bell Laboratories while he was a student at Pratt Institute. At AT&T Bell Laboratories, Kornegay worked under James West, co-inventor of the foil electret microphone, and he met other African American scientists, including Shirley Jackson and James Mitchell. He received a scholarship from Bell Laboratories and worked there subsequent summers. During college, Kornegay also was a successful Disc Jockey. Kornegay received his B.S. degree in electrical engineering in 1985. He continued to work at Bell Laboratories and was encouraged to pursue graduate studies with a leader in speech-processing engineering, Robert Broderson, at the University of California, Berkeley. After his father's death in 1987, Kornegay received support from his uncles, Wade and Robert Kornegay, to continue his studies in engineering.

AT & T Bell Laboratories.

Pratt Institute--Students.

Broderson, Robert W.

West, James E., 1931-.

Jackson, Shirley Ann, 1946-

Disc jockeys.

Speech processing systems.

Video Oral History Interview with Kevin Kornegay, Section  
A2011\_018\_001\_004, TRT: 4:29:04 2011/04/15

Kevin Kornegay recalls his decision to study at the University of California, Berkeley for graduate school after he had received a AT&T Bell Laboratories Research Fellowship. He received his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in electrical engineering in 1990 and 1992, respectively. At Berkeley, Kornegay was active in the Black Engineering and Science Students Association (BESSA), and worked to increase the number of under-represented faculty and graduate students in engineering. He recalls faculty members William Lester and Robert Bragg, and fellow students, Gary May, Valerie Taylor and Colin Paris. Kornegay explains his graduate research in testing functionality in digital systems. After graduate school, Kornegay was employed by International Business Machines as a corporate troubleshooter for system platforms at the Thomas J. Watson Research Center. International Business Machines Corporation.

African American students--Education (Higher)--California--Berkeley.

Electrical engineering--Study and teaching--California--Berkeley.

University of California, Berkeley.

Video Oral History Interview with Kevin Kornegay, Section  
A2011\_018\_001\_005, TRT: 5:31:36 2011/04/15

Kevin Kornegay talks about his decision to return to academia in 1994, noting that IBM was in discussions about divesting from research. Kornegay's research work was able to shift as needed because he developed a strong academic background at the University of California, Berkeley. His research focused on the applications of silicon carbide, a new semi-conductor material, in electronic devices. Kornegay worked at Purdue University only for a short period because of concerns about the

unfriendly community atmosphere and Ku Klux Klan activity in West Lafayette, Indiana. After serving on the faculty of Massachusetts Institute of Technology for one year, Kornegay was hired at Cornell University in 1997. He became the supervisor for a student group competing in the Autonomous Underwater Vehicle competition sponsored by the Office of Naval Research. The team won the championship the same weekend that Kornegay secured funding from Qualcomm for his research group. Cornell University. College of Engineering.

Ku Klux Klan (1915-).

Silicon carbide.

Electrical engineers.

Electrical engineering--Study and teaching (Graduate).

Video Oral History Interview with Kevin Kornegay, Section A2011\_018\_001\_006, TRT: 6:29:58 2011/04/15

Kevin Kornegay concludes his discussion on the Autonomous Underwater Vehicle Competition of 2003. After noting some of the awards that he has received, he discusses his research in data-transport and some of the challenges his research group addressed in their work from 2004 to 2006. He also contemplates the ever-present challenge of increasing the speed of the Internet. In considering the future of information technology, Kornegay states that he believes new devices will rely on external processors and quick access to information, and the internet will need to adapt to meet these demands. During his career as a professor, Kornegay has supervised twenty-four graduate students, four of whom were African American. Kornegay is concerned about black male youth in American society and emphasizes the importance of establishing positive black male role models.

African American graduate students.

Internet.

African American men--Social conditions.

Video Oral History Interview with Kevin Kornegay, Section A2011\_018\_001\_007, TRT: 7:09:18 2011/04/15

Kevin Kornegay discusses his family members, including his two sons who are eighteen and fourteen years old, and

his mother, Dorothy Lattie Scott Kornegay, who is still living. Kornegay discusses his desire to be remembered as a person who loved to help others succeed.

Fathers and sons.

African American families.

African American fathers.