

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Vincent Lane

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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>	Lane, Vincent, 1942-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Vincent Lane,
<b>Dates:</b>	January 18, 2012
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2012
<b>Physical Description:</b>	10 uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:51:43).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Real estate executive and real estate developer Vincent Lane (1942 - ) served as chairman of the Chicago Housing from 1988 and 1995. He has been president of the American Community Housing Associates, Inc. and CFO of the Woodlawn Community Development Corporation. Lane was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 18, 2012, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2012_015
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Real estate executive and real estate developer Vincent Lane was born on March 29, 1942 in West Point, Mississippi to Doyle Lane and Bertha Lee. He grew up on the southside of Chicago and graduated from Tilden Technical High School in 1960. Lane earned his B.S. degree in business administration from Roosevelt University in 1968. After earning his undergraduate degree, he worked in the accounting departments of several companies including Mt. Sinai Hospital, International Harvester and U.S. Steel. Lane received his M.B.A degree from the

University of Chicago in 1973.

After completing his education, Lane became senior vice president of the Woodlawn Community Development Corporation (WCDC). In 1976, Lane served as the president and general manager of Urban Services and Development, Inc. and LSM Venture Associates housing management companies. In 1988, Lane was appointed by managing director and chairman of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). As chairman, he re-organized the CHA creating new programs such as the Chicago Housing Authority Police Department and Operation Clean Sweep. In 1991, Lane became president of American Community Housing Associates, Inc. Lane resigned from the CHA in 1995 after serving seven years as chairman. From 1997 to 2002, Lane served as president of Affordable Community Housing Advocate, LLC. In 2004, Lane became CFO of Woodlawn Community Development Corporation and since 2006, he has been a consultant responsible for the management of WCDC's real estate development program.

Lane has served on the boards of several organizations including the Corporation for Supportive Housing, National Historic Trust, Women's Treatment Center, Urban Land Institute and Roosevelt University. He received much recognition for his work in affordable housing development including the Regional Award for Minority Developer of the Year from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Distinguished Public Service Award from the Anti-Defamation League and the Visionary Award from the Boys and Girls Club. Lane is married to Rita Denise Vargas and has three adult children Vincent, Steven and Craig.

Vincent Lane was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on January 18, 2012.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Vincent Lane was conducted by Larry Crowe on January 18, 2012, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 10 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Real estate executive and real estate developer Vincent Lane (1942 - ) served as chairman of the Chicago Housing from 1988 and 1995. He has been president of the American Community Housing Associates, Inc. and CFO of the Woodlawn Community Development Corporation.

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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:**

Lane, Vincent, 1942-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### **Subjects:**

African Americans--Interviews

Lane, Vincent, 1942---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:**

Real Estate Developer

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

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 Vincent Lane, January 18, 2012. 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 Vincent Lane, Section  
A2012\_015\_001\_001, TRT: 1:30:14 2012/01/18

Vincent Lane was born on March 29, 1942 in West Point, Mississippi. His mother, Bertha Spraggins Lane, was born in West Point, attended Mary Holmes School and went on to teach there. Lane's maternal family owned almost one hundred acres of land in Mississippi for almost a century, where they grew cotton, corn, and watermelons as cash crops. His grandfather was known as a master barbecue-er in the area and his grandmother, Jessie Lee Spraggins, was known for her desserts, which she often baked for white neighbors and customers, who passed them off as their own in cook-offs. Lane's father, Doyle Lane, lost his parents when he was young; he only had a fourth grade education and worked for the Bryan family in Mississippi, a descendant of whom was mayor of West Point at the time of the interview. Lane's parents met and married in West Point. His father had been previously married. Lane visited Mississippi as a child; he recalls his family's land and the segregation of the movie theaters and soda fountains.

Video Oral History Interview with Vincent Lane, Section  
A2012\_015\_001\_002, TRT: 2:30:45 2012/01/18

Vincent Lane's family moved to Chicago, Illinois from West Point, Mississippi when he was four months old. His father was a landlord and superintendent at a smelting plant and his mother operated a bar. In Chicago, he, his parents, and his two brothers lived in a cold-water flat across from Wentworth Gardens public housing project, not far from Comiskey Park, and the predominantly Irish

neighborhood of Bridgeport. He also remembers selling papers at Comiskey Park and the hostility of Bridgeport residents towards African Americans. Lane describes the neighborhood and its tenement buildings prior to the development of public housing along the State Street Corridor. Lane attended Robert S. Abbott Elementary School; he once got in trouble with his mother for skipping school. Lane attended Tilden Technical High School in the Back of the Yard neighborhood. He describes the rodeos at International Amphitheater in Back of the Yards, Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood and Louis Theatre and State Theatre.

Video Oral History Interview with Vincent Lane, Section  
A2012\_015\_001\_003, TRT: 3:32:58 2012/01/18

Vincent Lane illustrates the political power of Reverend T.E. Brown of Progressive Baptist Church in Chicago, Illinois and talks about the construction of the Dan Ryan Expressway in 1961 and African American support for Mayor Richard J. Daley's administration. Lane describes the stores, theaters and clubs that characterized life on the South Side of Chicago in the 1940s and 1950s and shares his recollection of how public policy, integration, and the building of public housing projects impacted the African American community. Lane graduated from Tilden Technical High School in Chicago in 1960, where he was interested in engineering. He enrolled at the University of Illinois, Navy Pier campus in Chicago with the intention of studying electrical engineering. While an undergraduate, he worked at Immigration and Naturalization Service. He transferred and earned his B.S. degree from Roosevelt University in the 1966, while working at International Harvester and U.S. Steel, and running his own business.

Video Oral History Interview with Vincent Lane, Section  
A2012\_015\_001\_004, TRT: 4:29:12 2012/01/18

Vincent Lane graduated from Roosevelt University in Chicago, Illinois in 1966 with a B.S. degree in business. He worked at International Harvester until he felt that he was no longer able to advance. He then worked at Mount Sinai Hospital as an assistant business manager before being promoted to business manager, then controller. At

Mount Sinai, Lane was involved in community relations efforts following the 1968 riots after the assassination of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He describes the riots and the decision to build an additional medical center on Chicago's West Side to meet community needs. Lane was the highest ranking person of color in Sinai's management organization at the time. In 1969, he was recruited to handle finances at Tuesday magazine. He left after two years after being contacted to handle the finances at The Woodlawn Organization, a community group on Chicago's South Side. Lane talks about various black businessmen he knew over the years, including HistoryMaker Lester McKeever.

Video Oral History Interview with Vincent Lane, Section  
A2012\_015\_001\_005, TRT: 5:29:34 2012/01/18

Vincent Lane worked for The Woodlawn Organization (TWO), a community group in Chicago's Woodlawn neighborhood on the South Side from 1971 through 1974. Before his time there, the organization grappled fires set intentionally so landlords could collect the insurance policy. Lane describes the changes in Woodlawn, a historically Jewish neighborhood, as more African Americans moved into the area in the 1960s, and the neighborhood and TWO's relationship to the University of Chicago. During his time there, the organization built Woodlawn Gardens and Jackson Park Terrace and tried to develop the Maryland Theater. In the midst of working at TWO, Lane earned his M.B.A. from the University of Chicago. Lane also reflects upon gentrification in the city as a whole, the state of the South Side, and the effects of the demolition of public housing high rises and administration of housing vouchers. He resigned from TWO in 1974 and founded Urban Services and Development, Inc. and LSM Venture Associates a year later.

Video Oral History Interview with Vincent Lane, Section  
A2012\_015\_001\_006, TRT: 6:29:36 2012/01/18

Vincent Lane developed a multi-family housing development as a joint venture with the Seventh Day Adventist Church, the Lake Region, on Chicago, Illinois's South Side. Lane secured loans for his development work

from Lloyds, a British bank, because Chicago based banks did not want to invest in African American neighborhoods. He also used project-based section 8 vouchers to build supportive housing for people with disabilities. In 1986, Lane was honored with a Certificate of Special Achievement from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for his development of the Continental Plaza Shopping Center. Lane first became involved in public housing through his role as an officer of the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC). Lane believes the biggest flaw with public housing is the lack of economic diversity due to the Brooke Amendment of 1969 and the neglect of the facilities by the City of Chicago. He talks about HistoryMaker Renault Robinson, who preceded him as chair of the Chicago Housing Authority.

Video Oral History Interview with Vincent Lane, Section A2012\_015\_001\_007, TRT: 7:29:47 2012/01/18

Vincent Lane made broad changes in the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) when he became chairman in 1988. In the late 1980s, public housing high rises had significant problems with gang activity, drugs, and violence. Additionally, CHA funds had been misallocated and had not been used for services for residents. In 1988, Lane received a call from noted community activist Nancy Jefferson, who asked him to act on the problems she saw, including the burning of a child in Rockwell Gardens. Lane implemented Operation Clean Sweep, a strategy by which he and a team of police officers, arrived unannounced at high rises and “swept” the building, clearing it of anyone who could not prove residence. He then set up curfews and issued resident I.D. cards. Lane was criticized by the ACLU and others for violating tenants’ rights. He felt the raids were necessary to reduce violent crime and drug trade within the high rises. Lane talks about the positive reactions from residents and changes in public housing after the sweeps.

Video Oral History Interview with Vincent Lane, Section A2012\_015\_001\_008, TRT: 8:29:10 2012/01/18

Vincent Lane states that Chicago’s State Street Corridor is the largest concentration of public housing in the nation. He believes that HistoryMaker Renault Robinson was

unsuccessful as chair of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) because he never got the support of the Chicago Police Department. Lane organized a separated CHA police force commanded by Leroy O'Shield funded by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Lane believes Operation Clean Sweep reduced the murder rate in Chicago and has been consulted to implement the model in other cities. Lane was co-chair of the National Commission on Severely Distressed Public Housing, which generated a program called Hope VI to tear down high rise public housing and give money to private developers. Though supportive of mixed-income housing, he recognizes some of the problems with HUD's development requirements. In 1991, Lane began working with the American Community Housing Association and in 1995, he resigned from the CHA.

Video Oral History Interview with Vincent Lane, Section  
A2012\_015\_001\_009, TRT: 9:29:13 2012/01/18

Vincent Lane received a Public Official of the Year Award from Governing magazine in 1994. The same year, Alderman Dorothy Tillman called for his resignation from Chicago Housing Authority (CHA). Lane oversaw the beginning of the demolition of Chicago's high rise projects. He remembers the first demolition, in 1995, of the Washington Park Extension on the city's south lakefront. During his tenure he also reduced the staff of the CHA and privatized the management of CHA properties. In 1995, he was pressured to resign. Lane was later indicted in 2001, on charges related to an attempt to refinance Continental Plaza, for which he served time in prison. He maintains his innocence and talks about the toll the indictment took on him and his family. He reflects upon his career in public housing, his future plans, as well as his legacy. He also describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community.

Video Oral History Interview with Vincent Lane, Section  
A2012\_015\_001\_010, TRT: 10:21:14 2012/01/18

Vincent Lane became chairman of Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) by way of his involvement with the Metropolitan Planning Council. He was recruited to run the agency after the sudden death of former Illinois

governor Richard Ogilvie. He talks about some of the people who represented the interests of Chicago Housing Authority residents during his tenure as chairman of the CHA, including Artensa Randolph and Billy Wyland. Lane considers what he would have done differently in his career and describes how he would like to be remembered. Lane has been married twice and talks about his children and grandchildren. He concludes by narrating his photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Vincent Lane, Section  
A2012\_015\_Vincent\_Lane\_06\_MED\_WEBCLI.P001, TRT:

Video Oral History Interview with Vincent Lane, Section  
A2012\_015\_Vincent\_Lane\_06\_MED\_WEBCLI.P002, TRT: