

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Albert N. Thompson, Jr.

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Thompson, Albert N., 1946-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Albert N. Thompson, Jr.,
Dates:	March 20, 2012
Bulk Dates:	2012
Physical Description:	5 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:05:02).
Abstract:	Chemistry professor and chemist Albert N. Thompson, Jr. (1946 -) is chair of Spelman College's Division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics. He has garnered several research grants from prestigious organizations in the field of porphyrin chemistry such as the National Science Foundation. Thompson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 20, 2012, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2012_072
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Chemist and chemistry professor Albert N. Thompson, Jr. was born October 31, 1946 to Martha Furgess Thompson and Albert Thompson, Sr. in Columbia, South Carolina, (Richland County). His mother was an elementary school teacher and his father was a college professor. After attending Savannah Kay Elementary and William Miller Jr. High Schools, Thompson attended and graduated from Phillis Wheatley, Sr. High School in Houston, Texas in 1964. He received his B.S. degree in chemistry and his M.S. degree in inorganic chemistry from Texas Southern

University in 1973 and 1975, respectively. Thompson served as an instructor of physical science and chemistry at Houston Community College and Texas Southern University between 1974 and 1975. He earned his Ph.D. degree in inorganic chemistry from Howard University in 1979. He then became an assistant professor of chemistry at Fisk University.

Thompson served as an assistant professor of chemistry at Fayetteville State University in North Carolina. In 1981, he did a faculty research fellowship at the USAF School of Aerospace Medicine at Brooks Air Force Base, Texas before being hired as a professor at Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. Thompson served as a visiting professor of chemistry at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1990. In 2011, Thompson earned a promotion to chair Spelman College's Division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics.

Thompson has received funding and co-funding from several research and educational grants from organizations such as the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Science Foundation (NSF), United States Air Force, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Department of Energy and the United States Army. Thompson has also served as a research and program proposal consultant to the NSF, NASA, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), NIH, Quality Education for Minorities (QEM) and Project Kaleidoscope organizations. A member of the University of Chicago James Franck Institute NSF Materials Research Center Visiting Advisory Committee, Thompson is an advocate for minority student training in science and research careers. He organized and is involved with the American Chemical Society's sponsored summer research program for Atlanta area high school students, Project SEED.

Thompson is a member of the American Chemical Society Beta Kappa Chi Scientific Honor Society and the Sigma Pi Sigma Physics Honor Society. He was also featured in an *Ebony* magazine article on Spelman College. In 2011, he received a distinguished alumni award from the School of Science and Technology at Texas Southern University. Thompson has two children, Amber and Tayloir. He resides in Atlanta, Georgia.

Albert N. Thompson, Jr. was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 20, 2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Albert N. Thompson, Jr. was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 20, 2012, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 5

uncompressed MOV digital video files. Chemistry professor and chemist Albert N. Thompson, Jr. (1946 -) is chair of Spelman College's Division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics. He has garnered several research grants from prestigious organizations in the field of porphyrin chemistry such as the National Science Foundation.

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:

Thompson, Albert N., 1946-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Thompson, Albert N., 1946---Interviews

African American chemists--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Spelman College

Spelman College

Occupations:

Chemistry Professor

Chemist

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers|ScienceMakers

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 Albert N. Thompson, Jr., March 20, 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).

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 Albert N. Thompson, Jr., Section A2012_072_001_001, TRT: 1:28:27 2012/03/20

Albert Thompson, Jr. talks about his family background. His mother, Martha Viola Furgess Thompson was born on December 3, 1923 in Hopkins, South Carolina. She graduated from Benedict College in Columbia, South Carolina in 1945 with her degree in elementary education later earning her master's degree in education. His father, Albert Nelson Thompson, Sr. was born on March 5, 1920 in Columbia, South Carolina. He graduated from

Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama in 1940 and embarked on a career as an educator. In the late 1940s, Thompson, Sr. earned his master's degree from New York University, later earning his Ph.D. degree from the University of Pittsburgh. Thompson, Jr. was born on October 31, 1946 in Columbia, South Carolina but relocated at age three when his father accepted a teaching position at Texas Southern University in Houston, Texas. Thompson, Jr. credits this nurturing campus environment for piquing his interest in science.

Reconstruction (U.S. history, 1865-1877).

Migration, Internal--United States.

Segregation--Texas--History.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Video Oral History Interview with Albert N. Thompson, Jr., Section A2012_072_001_002, TRT: 2:29:23 2012/03/20

Albert Thompson, Jr. attended school at Savannah Georgia Kay Elementary School in the Harrisburg section of Houston. He was gifted in science and moderate in math yet had difficulty in English. Thompson, Jr. attended William Miller Junior High School where his sixth grade teacher first exposed him to formal science. He then attended Phyllis Wheatley High School excelling academically and participating in sports and music. Graduating in 1964, Thompson, Jr. began his college career at West Virginia State University and Prairie View A & M University. In 1967, he was drafted into the U.S. Army and upon his completion of service, used the G.I. Bill to enroll at Texas Southern University, where he graduated with his B.S. degree in chemistry in 1973. He also earned his M.S. degree from Texas Southern University and his mentor, Dr. Ray Wilson, encouraged him to enter Howard University's chemistry Ph.D. program in 1975.

Texas Southern University.

Civil rights movements--United States--20th century.

Howard University.

Segregation--Texas--History.

Affirmative action programs.

Video Oral History Interview with Albert N. Thompson, Jr., Section A2012_072_001_003, TRT: 3:32:03 2012/03/20

Albert Thompson, Jr. received his Ph.D. degree in inorganic chemistry from Howard University in 1978 where he thrived under a grueling academic schedule. Although he had numerous postdoctoral offers, he accepted an assistant professor position at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. Because the position did not fit his personal and professional vision of growth and development, he left after two years and accepted a position at Fayetteville State University in Fayetteville, North Carolina. After a year at Fayetteville State, he accepted a research fellow position at the U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine in Texas where he researched porphyrins as a detector of Hydrozine. In 1981, he joined the faculty at Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia as an assistant professor of physical science and chemistry. At Spelman, he joined a faculty and school that committed its resources to producing more black female scientists.

National Science Foundation (U.S.)

United States. Air Force.

National Institute of Health.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Video Oral History Interview with Albert N. Thompson, Jr., Section A2012_072_001_004, TRT: 4:24:43 2012/03/20

Albert Thompson, Jr., along with several other Spelman faculty members, was interviewed for 'Ebony Magazine' in 2002 due to the success that Spelman has had preparing African American women for graduate and professional schools and subsequently careers in science. His philosophy on STEM centers on the need to emphasize excellence in science and math at an early age. In 2011, he was appointed chair of the Division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics. Dr. Thompson sees a bright future for Spelman in the sciences based on the increase of science major fields offered, current science majors, and the

number of graduates that go on to earn Ph.D. degrees in science. He remains fully dedicated to teaching and mentoring young people in the sciences. Thompson is divorced and has two daughters, Amber and Tayloir. Amber is working on her M.B.A. at Georgia State University and Tayloir is in the 10th grade.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Video Oral History Interview with Albert N. Thompson, Jr., Section A2012_072_001_005, TRT: 5:10:26 2012/03/20

Albert Thompson describes his photos.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.