

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with James Winston

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Winston, James, 1947-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with James Winston,
Dates:	May 3, 2012
Bulk Dates:	2012
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:07:15).
Abstract:	Broadcast executive and telecommunications lawyer James Winston (1947 -) is one of the leading advocates for African American radio broadcasters in the country. Winston was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 3, 2012, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2012_083
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Communications attorney James L. Winston was born on August 24, 1947 to Corrie Conwill Winston and Jeff Winston in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He has one other sibling, Frances Winston Adderley. Winston graduated from Belmar Elementary School in 1959 and enrolled at Westinghouse High School in Pittsburgh. After attending Westinghouse, Winston was admitted to the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. He graduated with his B.S. degree in electrical engineering in 1969. Three years later, he received his J.D. degree in law from Harvard Law School in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Upon graduation, Winston was hired as an attorney for the Roxbury Multi-Service Center in Boston. He then worked for the New York-based law firm LeBoeuf, Lamb, Leiby and MacRae as an attorney specializing in public utility law before serving as associate counsel for the Western Union Telegraph Company in Washington, D.C. In 1978, Winston worked as a legal assistant to Federal Communications Commissioner Robert F. Lee. After two years with the FCC, he was hired as an associate attorney by the Wolf, Block, Schorr and Solis-Cohen law firm, also in Washington, D.C. Winston then became a managing partner in the law firm of Rubin, Winston, Diercks, Harris & Cooke, LLP in 1981, specializing in telecommunications law. Additionally, he served as executive director and general counsel for the National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters, Inc. starting in 1982.

For nine years in a row, Winston was named one of the “Leading African Americans in Radio” by *Radio Ink* magazine. He was also inducted into the American Urban Radio Network Hall of Fame and presented the “Lifetime Leadership Achievement Award.” Winston was also inducted into the Minority Media and Telecommunications Council Hall of Fame and presented its “Lifetime Achievement Award.”

In addition to his achievements, Winston has served on the advisory boards for the Federal Communications Bar Association Executive Committee, the Elon University School of Communications in Elon, North Carolina and the Florida A&M University School of Journalism & Graphic Communication in Tallahassee, Florida. Winston is married and has four adult children. He resides in Silver Spring, Maryland.

James L. Winston was interviewed by the *The HistoryMakers* on May 3, 2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with James Winston was conducted by Larry Crowe on May 3, 2012, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Broadcast executive and telecommunications lawyer James Winston (1947 -) is one of the leading advocates for African American radio broadcasters in the country.

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:

Winston, James, 1947-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Winston, James, 1947- --Interviews

African American lawyers--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Telecommunications Lawyer

Broadcast Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

LawMakers|MediaMakers

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 James Winston, May 3, 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 5/30/2023 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 James Winston, Section A2012_083_001_001, TRT: 1:29:09 ?

James Winston describes his family's history. His mother, Corrie Mary Conwill, was born in Rienzi, Mississippi, on April 25, 1920. She attended college for a year before marrying his father, Jeff Winston, in 1944. Winston talks about his maternal grandparents, Mathias and Frances Conwill, their lives as farmers in Rienzi, and his mother's growing up there. His father was born in Boonville, Mississippi on January 20, 1903. In high school, he moved to Pennsylvania in search of work, and settled down in Pittsburgh, where he began to work for Westinghouse Electric. Winston talks about how his parents met and married; his sister, Frances; his parents' personalities and his likeness to them. He describes his memories of growing up in Pittsburgh, where his family moved from the Hill District to Homewood, the occurrence of "white flight" as black families moved to Homewood, and his family's home there. He also discusses his mother's success as an insurance salesperson in a segregated Pittsburgh in the 1960s.

African American families.

African American mothers.

African American fathers.

Childhood and youth--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.

Race relations--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.

Video Oral History Interview with James Winston, Section A2012_083_001_002, TRT: 2:30:17 ?

James Winston attended Belmar Elementary School and Westinghouse High School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He talks about his favorite subjects in school, his interest in drawing, television and movies, and developing skills in chess. In high school, Winston managed the school's swim team, and worked after school as a lab assistant in the electrical engineering department at Carnegie Mellon University, then known as Carnegie Tech. Winston discusses sports in Pittsburgh, black professionals in his neighborhood of Homewood, being a Boy Scout and an Explorer, and growing up listening to the black-format WAMO radio station in Pittsburgh. He has memories of his parents attending church, his Saturday art classes at the Carnegie Library, riding in the streetcars, and winters in the city. In high school, Winston excelled academically and had many good teachers, also benefitting from the sound advice of a school counselor who encouraged him to pursue an engineering degree at the University of Pennsylvania.

African Americans--Education--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.

Childhood and youth--Activities--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.

Carnegie-Mellon University.

Vocational guidance--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.

African American neighborhoods--Pennsylvania--Pittsburgh.

Video Oral History Interview with James Winston, Section A2012_083_001_003, TRT: 3:30:11 ?

James Winston began his undergraduate studies at the University of Pennsylvania in electrical engineering in 1965. He questioned his choice of engineering, and decided to pursue his graduate studies in law. In college, Winston was actively involved in the Society of African and Afro American Students (SAAS), and deeply influenced by the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King in 1968. He recalls his interaction with other black students in Philadelphia as well as how he focused on his studies in his senior year at Penn. In 1969, Winston enrolled at Harvard Law School. He describes his decision to attend Harvard Law School and his positive experience there. In 1972, he began working as a community activist and part-time anti-apartheid activist at Roxbury Multi-Service Center, but did not feel fulfilled. In 1973, Winston moved to New

York, where he was hired by the Wall Street law firm, LeBoeuf, Lamb, Leiby and MacRae. He describes his success there, and his decision to move to Washington, D.C. in 1976.

University of Pennsylvania.

King, Martin Luther Jr., 1929-1968--Assassination.

Harvard Law School.

Community activists--Massachusetts.

Law firms--New York (State)--New York.

Video Oral History Interview with James Winston, Section A2012_083_001_004, TRT: 4:29:37 ?

James Winston worked as an attorney in the Wall Street office of LeBoeuf, Lamb, Leiby and MacRae law firm from 1973 to 1976. Winston enjoyed success at the firm and received encouragement from the firm's senior management. In 1976, he moved to the firm's Washington, D.C. office. However, he did not feel comfortable with the firm's position on nuclear proliferation and their representation of the South African government. He left LeBoeuf, Lamb, Leiby and MacRae in 1997 to serve as associate counsel to the Western Union Telegraph Company, where he was exposed to the work of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). In 1978, he accepted a position as legal assistant to Commissioner Robert E. Lee of the FCC. He describes his positive experience at the FCC working with Commissioner Lee, and the latter's support of ultra-high frequency (UHF) television. Winston also talks about the National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters (NABOB), his involvement with this organization and the popularity of FM radio.

Western Union Telegraph Company.

United States. Federal Communications Commission.

African American radio broadcasters.

Law firms--Wall Street (New York, N.Y.).

Lee, Robert E.

Video Oral History Interview with James Winston, Section A2012_083_001_005, TRT: 5:31:22 ?

James Winston describes the changes in the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) policies affected by changes in policies from President Jimmy Carter's administration to that of President Ronald Reagan's administration and the subsequent effects on minority ownership of broadcast properties. Winston discusses the details of the FCC's Fairness Doctrine, and the policies that promoted minority ownership of broadcast properties in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The lack of enforcement of these policies during the Reagan administration, in its efforts to deregulate broadcasting contributed to challenges Winston eventually faced as the director of the National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters (NABOB). Winston also talks about the U.S. Congress passing legislation that hurt the minority ownership of broadcast properties in 1995, and the consolidation of radio and television ownership as a result of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

United States. Federal Communications Commission.

Fairness doctrine (Broadcasting)--United States.

Reagan, Ronald.

Radio--Law and legislation--United States.

Minorities in broadcasting--United States.

United States. Telecommunications Act, 1996

Video Oral History Interview with James Winston, Section A2012_083_001_006, TRT: 6:29:41 ?

Since 1982, James Winston has served as the executive director and general counsel of the National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters (NABOB), and has been one of the leading advocates for African American broadcasters in the country. In this section of his interview, he reflects upon his legacy, the importance of minority ownership of businesses and the changing face of television and radio. Winston also expresses the need for African Americans to pursue entrepreneurship in technology as well as focusing on the African American presence on the internet. He also talks about his hopes and concerns for the African American community. Winston then changes his discussion to his law firm, Rubin, Winston, Diercks, Harris, & Cooke, and the shortcomings of Arbitron's portable people meter in accessing minority consumer choices.

African American leadership.

Minority business enterprises.

African Americans--Entrepreneurship.

Law firms.

Minorities in broadcasting--United States.

Video Oral History Interview with James Winston, Section A2012_083_001_007, TRT: 7:06:58 ?

Winston talks about his family and how he would like to be remembered. He also reflects upon the future of the National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters (NABOB) and the significance of radio for social change.

African American families.

Radio broadcasting--Social aspects.

Minorities in broadcasting--United States.