

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Roosevelt Calbert

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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>	Calbert, Roosevelt
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Roosevelt Calbert,
<b>Dates:</b>	July 12, 2012
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2012
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:39:07).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Physicist and academic administrator Roosevelt Calbert (1931 - 2018) led a twenty-four year career at the National Science Foundation (NSF), where he established many minority science education programs. Calbert was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 12, 2012, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2012_153
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Physicist and education administrator Dr. Roosevelt Calbert was born on November 13, 1931 in Philadelphia, Mississippi. After graduating from Cameron St. High School, Dr. Calbert attended Jackson State University, where he earned his B.S. degree in science. He went on to receive his M.A. degree in science for teaching from the University of Michigan. Then, he attended the University of Kansas to study plasma physics. He earned his M.S. degree in physics (1969) and his Ph.D. degree in physics (1971).

Early in his career, Dr. Calbert served as director of the Cooperative Academic Planning (CAP) Program at the Institute for Services to Education where he developed curriculum change in black colleges. In 1975, Dr. Calbert began his long career at the National Science Foundation (NSF), joining NSF's Directorate for Science and Engineering Education. Dr. Calbert held many positions over his twenty-four year career with NSF, including senior program analyst in the Office of Planning and Resources Management, agency representative for the White House Initiative of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), section head of Minority Programs and deputy director of the Division of Human Resource Development.

Dr. Calbert's role at NSF was based on his commitment to improving educational opportunities for minority students. He established several programs that are geared toward science, engineering, and mathematics education for underrepresented students. In 1992, he became a member of the Senior Executive Service. Calbert retired as NSF's director of the Division of Human Resource Development in the Directorate for Education and Human Resources (EHR) in 1999. In addition to his work at NSF, Calbert has served on the faculty at both Alcorn State University and Alabama State University. He published more than fifty academic articles and presented at professional conferences.

Dr. Calbert received numerous accolades throughout his career, including the National Science Foundation Director's Equal Opportunity Achievement Award and the Senior Executive Service Performance Award. In 1986,

he received a Presidential Citation Award from Jackson State University as an outstanding alumnus. In 2007, he was inducted into The National Black College Alumni Hall of Fame. In addition, he was awarded the Foundation's Distinguished Service Award, the agency's highest non-monetary honor. This award is given for exceptional leadership, program development or improvement, service in the public interest, or similar contributions that substantially benefit science or engineering, science or engineering education, NSF, or the general public.

Dr. Calbert lives in Reston, Virginia, with his wife Thelma. He has four children, eight grandchildren, and one great grandchild.

Calbert passed away on June 7, 2018.

Dr. Roosevelt Calbert was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on June 12, 2012.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Roosevelt Calbert was conducted by Larry Crowe on July 12, 2012, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Physicist and academic administrator Roosevelt Calbert (1931 - 2018) led a twenty-four year career at the National Science Foundation (NSF), where he established many minority science education programs.

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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:

Calbert, Roosevelt

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Calbert, Roosevelt--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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National Science Foundation

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## Occupations:

Physicist

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

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 Roosevelt Calbert, July 12, 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).

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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 Roosevelt Calbert, Section A2012\_153\_001\_001, TRT: 1:29:40  
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Roosevelt Calbert was born in Philadelphia, Mississippi on November 13, 1931. His mother, Ann Pugh Calbert, was born around 1913 in Waynesboro, Mississippi. His father, Jimmie Calbert, was born in 1908, also in Waynesboro, Mississippi. He has nine siblings: three brothers named James Earl, Horace, and Charles; and sisters named Alma, Gertrude, Mary Ann, Sue, Shirley and Marie. He talks about his family background and a few of his early childhood memories.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Video Oral History Interview with Roosevelt Calbert, Section A2012\_153\_001\_002, TRT: 2:29:54  
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Roosevelt Calbert describes his experiences growing up in Canton, Mississippi. He attended Cameron Street High School during World War II and graduated as the class valedictorian in 1946. Calbert worked full time during high school. After earning a \$50 scholarship, he went on to attend Jackson State College in Jackson, Mississippi, where he studied science. While there, he joined the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity.

Affirmative action programs.

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Affirmative action programs.

Video Oral History Interview with Roosevelt Calbert, Section A2012\_153\_001\_003, TRT: 3:29:23  
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Roosevelt Calbert describes his experiences at Jackson State College. His family moved to Chicago, Illinois while he was in college and during summer breaks, Calbert would go to Chicago to earn money to help pay for his expenses. Calbert talks about having a photostatic memory and earning perfect grades throughout college because of this ability. He talks about his experiences and memorable events during the Civil Rights Movement. After graduating as class valedictorian from Jackson State College, Calbert went on to the University of Michigan to pursue his master's degree for teaching of science. Calbert received his master's and doctorate degrees in physics from the University of Kansas.

Affirmative action programs.

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Video Oral History Interview with Roosevelt Calbert, Section A2012\_153\_001\_004, TRT: 4:29:32  
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Roosevelt Calbert talks about memorable events during the civil rights movement. He discusses his experience at the University of Kansas, where he studied plasma physics, and his dissertation is entitled 'The F and K Components of the Solar Corona.' After graduating from the University of Kansas in 1971, Calbert secured a leadership position at the Institute of Services for Education, where his goals included increasing the numbers of minorities in STEM fields and developing curriculums for HBCUs. Four years later, Calbert joined the National Science Foundation as Directorate for science and engineering education, where he has spent the bulk of his career. He discusses his experiences and professional activities throughout his career.

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Video Oral History Interview with Roosevelt Calbert, Section A2012\_153\_001\_005, TRT: 5:26:12  
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Roosevelt Calbert talks about his career and professional activities at the National Science Foundation, where he served as the director of science and engineering education. Before retiring in 2000, Calbert received the Senior Executive Service performance award in 1994 and helped pass House Resolution - 3007. He and his wife, Thelma Nichols, have been married for fifty-eight years. They have four daughters: Debra, Jacquelyn, Rosalyn and Lori Ann.

Affirmative action programs.

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Affirmative action programs.

Video Oral History Interview with Roosevelt Calbert, Section A2012\_153\_001\_006, TRT: 6:14:26  
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Roosevelt Calbert describes his photos.

Affirmative action programs.

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Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.