

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Reginald Stuart

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Stuart, Reginald
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Reginald Stuart,
Dates:	August 29, 2012
Bulk Dates:	2012
Physical Description:	9 uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:25:36).
Abstract:	Newspaper correspondent and corporate recruiter Reginald Stuart (1948 -) , earned his M.S. degree in journalism from Columbia University in New York City, and wrote <i>Bailout: The Story Behind America's Billion Dollar Gamble on the "New" Chrysler Corporation</i> , a book about the government's 1979 financial bailout of the Chrysler Corporation. Stuart was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 29, 2012, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2012_231
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Newspaper correspondent and corporate recruiter Reginald Stuart was born on November 26, 1948 in Nashville Tennessee. He was raised by his parents with his older siblings, William H. Stuart, Jr., and Cassandra Stuart Woods. While attending Pearl High School, in Nashville, he worked as a disc jockey and had his own radio show. In 1965, he graduated from Pearl High and, three years later, earned his B.S. degree in sociology from Tennessee State University. After

working a short time for *The Nashville Tennessean* as a general assignment reporter and for WSIX-TV-AM-FM, the local ABC affiliate, Stuart received his M.S. degree in journalism from Columbia University in the City of New York in 1971.

In 1974, Stuart became a business and finance reporter for *The New York Times*. During his 13 years there, he also worked as national correspondent bureau chief in Detroit, Michigan, Atlanta, Georgia, and Miami, Florida. He covered the 1979 federal government bailout of the Chrysler Corporation. Stuart released a book based on the stories, *Bailout: The Story Behind America's Billion Dollar Gamble on the "New" Chrysler Corporation*. In Atlanta, Stuart reported on police investigations of a series of unsolved cases of missing and murdered children. He continued to write articles on the federal government's deregulation of major industries throughout the 1980s.

In 1987, Stuart left the *Times* and joined Knight Ridder Newspapers, Inc., as the Washington-based national affairs correspondent for the *Philadelphia Daily News*. There, he covered the 1988 presidential election and 1990 Census. Stuart's 1994 *Emerge Magazine* article about Kemba Smith, a young woman sent to prison for 24.5 years based on new federal mandatory sentencing laws regarding illegal drugs, was credited with generating the popular and political support that persuaded then President Bill Clinton to commute her prison sentence to time served. Afterward, he moved to the Knight Ridder Washington News Bureau news desk as an assistant editor, a post he held through 1996. In 1997, he was hired as Knight Ridder's corporate recruiter, finding individuals for newsroom and business positions, and coordinating Knight Ridder's early career talent development programs, including the Knight Ridder Scholars Program and Native American Internship Program.

Stuart was elected national president of the Society of Professional Journalists in 1994. He received the Ida B. Wells Award for promoting diversity in journalism, the Leadership in Diversity Award from the Asian American Journalists Association and the Wells Memorial Key from the Society of Professional Journalists. Stuart is married to Daryl Thomas Stuart with whom he has three children, Reginald II, Nicholas and Andrea.

Reginald Stuart was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on 08/29/2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Reginald Stuart was conducted by Larry

Crowe on August 29, 2012, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 9 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Newspaper correspondent and corporate recruiter Reginald Stuart (1948 -) , earned his M.S. degree in journalism from Columbia University in New York City, and wrote *Bailout: The Story Behind America's Billion Dollar Gamble on the "New" Chrysler Corporation*, a book about the government's 1979 financial bailout of the Chrysler Corporation.

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:

Stuart, Reginald

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Stuart, Reginald--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Knight-Ridder Newspapers, Inc.

Occupations:

Newspaper Correspondent

HistoryMakers® Category:

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 Reginald Stuart, August 29, 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 Reginald Stuart, Section
A2012_231_001_001, TRT: 1:29:43 2012/08/29

Reginald Stuart was born on November 26, 1948 in Nashville, Tennessee. His mother, Maxie Allen, was born on February 28, 1920 in Athens, Alabama. His maternal great-grandmother, Emily Turner, a Haitian immigrant, was sold into slavery upon arriving in the United States. His maternal grandparents bought a small farm in Alabama. When his grandmother died, his mother was sent to Nashville to live with relatives at age six. His mother attended Pearl High School and spent two years at Tennessee State University before marrying and raising her children. Both of Stuart's parents attended St. Luke's CME church. His father, William Stuart, Sr., was born on January 12, 1920 in Athens, Alabama. His paternal

grandfather was a mason and worked on the railroad and later built Stuart's childhood home. His father was a masonry contractor and enjoyed reading western novels. One of three children, Stuart remembers falling off of a bicycle, attending kindergarten, and listening to musicians rehearse in nightclubs in Nashville.

Video Oral History Interview with Reginald Stuart, Section
A2012_231_001_002, TRT: 2:30:23 2012/08/29

Reginald Stuart describes his father, William Stuart, Sr.'s talent for the board game Scrabble. As a child, Stuart listened to music at Club Baron in Nashville, Tennessee which was owned by Meharry College graduate Jack Brown. While there, Stuart met legends like James Brown, Ike and Tina Turner, and Sam Cooke as they rehearsed. He also recalls frequent gunfire at the club. Stuart remembers the smell of his family's Saturday barbeques. When Stuart was around ten years old, he created a weekly neighborhood newspaper called "The Neighborhood Times" which he wrote, published, and distributed for three years. He covered stories that occurred on his street and had people that he knew write columns and cartoons. Stuart printed the newspapers in his home and assembled them in his dining room. Stuart attended Ford Green Elementary School where his teacher, Ms. Hardy, made him the classroom weatherman.

Video Oral History Interview with Reginald Stuart, Section
A2012_231_001_003, TRT: 3:30:17 2012/08/29

Reginald Stuart recalls being diagnosed with epilepsy when he was in seventh grade which meant the end of his weekly neighborhood newspaper. Stuart attended Washington Junior High School and Pearl High School in Nashville, Tennessee. He took summer courses for several years and was able to graduate from high school a year early in 1965 at age sixteen. During high school, Stuart was editor of the student newspaper and the statistician and announcer for the basketball team. He describes the strong tradition of champion athletes. He also created a morning radio program for his school's news announcements. Stuart participated in Civil Rights activities and met Lester McKinney, HistoryMaker John Lewis, James Bevel, and Diane Nash. He did office work,

participated in marches, and picketed restaurants in middle school through tenth grade. By 1965, Nashville had become fully integrated. Stuart attended Tennessee State University where he managed the band, The Fabulous Nu-Tones and worked as a disc jockey.

Video Oral History Interview with Reginald Stuart, Section A2012_231_001_004, TRT: 4:29:14 2012/08/29

Reginald Stuart remembers listening to “Ironing Board Sam” and “The Hoss Man” on WAC Radio 1510 and talks about regional differences in musical tastes between New York and the South. Stuart earned his B.S. degree in sociology from Tennessee State University in 1968. His favorite professors were Mingo Scott and Lois McDougal. After a period of job searching, Stuart was hired shortly after graduation at The Nashville Tennessean as a general assignment reporter. Stuart describes the paper’s editor John Seigenthaler, a Civil Rights supporter who worked for President John F. Kennedy’s Justice Department to diffuse tensions between local officials and Freedom Riders. Having no previous newspaper experience, Stuart learned that reporters had beats and found his own beat covering transportation and aviation. Stuart reflects on how the journalism profession has changed since he started. He was given a chance to “sink or swim,” but now journalists are hired only if they have impeccable credentials.

Video Oral History Interview with Reginald Stuart, Section A2012_231_001_005, TRT: 5:32:34 2012/08/29

Reginald Stuart accepted a job at WSIX-TV-AM-FM, the local ABC affiliate in 1969. Despite the station’s weak signal and limited viewership, Stuart recalls reporting on a furniture store that offered a credit line and then garnished wages and discrimination in grand jury selection. In 1970, Stuart decided to pursue his M.S. degree in journalism from Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in New York City because he wanted the option of teaching journalism. Stuart found a strong network of alumni from The Nashville Tennessean in New York. While covering the 1970 elections at Columbia, Stuart was advised by CBS News’ Fred Friendly who pointed out that Stuart’s reporting was biased in favor of Al Gore, Sr.’s

reelection even though Gore lost the race. Friendly arranged a job for Stuart as Walter Cronkite's filler writer, but Stuart turned down the offer because he wanted to be a reporter. Stuart worked as a freelance journalist in Nashville until he was offered a position at The New York Times in 1974.

Video Oral History Interview with Reginald Stuart, Section
A2012_231_001_006, TRT: 6:29:40 2012/08/29

Reginald Stuart tells the story of meeting Abe Rosenthal, the editor of The New York Times, and being hired as a business and finance reporter in 1974. During his thirteen years there, Stuart worked as national correspondent bureau chief in Detroit, Michigan, Atlanta, Georgia, and Miami, Florida. Stuart recounts a story he covered during the 1970s energy crisis involving a criminal enterprise of layer loading coal to cheat utility companies. As Detroit Bureau Chief, Stuart covered Chrysler CEO Lee Iococca and the 1979 federal government's bailout of the Chrysler Corporation. Later, his book based on the stories, "Bailout: The Story Behind America's Billion Dollar Gamble on the 'New' Chrysler Corporation" was published. As Miami Bureau Chief, Stuart covered the Haitian immigrant crisis. As Atlanta Bureau Chief, Stuart reported on police investigations of Wayne Williams and a series of unsolved cases of missing and murdered children.

Video Oral History Interview with Reginald Stuart, Section
A2012_231_001_007, TRT: 7:29:57 2012/08/29

Reginald Stuart describes leaving The New York Times in 1987 after thirteen years in order to join the Philadelphia Daily News as a National Affairs Correspondent. In that role, Stuart covered the 1988 presidential campaign including the Democratic debate between Al Gore, Richard Gephardt, Michael Dukakis, George McGovern, and HistoryMaker Reverend Jesse Jackson. He talks about Jackson's comments on Hymietown and his role at the Democratic National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia. After the election, Stuart joined Knight Ridder newspapers as a recruiter where he helped to develop a number of scholarship programs. In the early 1990s, Stuart met a lawyer who put him in touch with Kemba Smith. Smith was a promising college student who fell in love with a

drug dealer and was charged under the RICO statute for his crimes and then sentenced to over 24 years in prison based on the mandatory drug sentencing laws passed by the U.S. Congress. Stuart covered her case with an in-depth article in Emerge magazine.

Video Oral History Interview with Reginald Stuart, Section A2012_231_001_008, TRT: 8:30:13 2012/08/29

Reginald Stuart talks about the public's reaction to his 1994 Emerge Magazine article on Kemba Smith. Published as a 12,000 word, two part story, it was a best seller that received hundreds of letters and garnered political attention from U.S. Congressmen Maxine Waters and Bobby Scott. In the years following its publication, Stuart wrote three follow up stories on Kemba Smith. Stuart has received prestigious awards for excellence in journalism although he did not win the Pulitzer Prize for the Kemba Smith story. In 1992, Stuart served as Chairman of the Speaker's Committee for the National Press Club and worked with guests such as Margaret Thatcher, Julia Child, and Nelson Mandela. Stuart views Sharon Stone as the most disappointing speaker and comments on President Bill Clinton's refusal to participate. Stuart talks about his involvement with the Society for Professional Journalists and his ambivalence about the National Association of Black Journalists. Stuart reflects upon his legacy.

Video Oral History Interview with Reginald Stuart, Section A2012_231_001_009, TRT: 9:23:35 2012/08/29

Reginald Stuart shares his hopes and concerns for the African American community. He is concerned that African Americans have lost focus on social justice and economic equality issues. Stuart talks about meeting his wife, Daryl Thomas Stuart, at a dinner and marrying her within three months. Married for over forty years, they have three children, Reginald II, Nicholas and Andrea. Stuart reflects upon his career success and how he would like to be remembered. Stuart concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.