

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Joseph Gordon, II

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Gordon, J. G. (Joseph G.)
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Joseph Gordon, II,
Dates:	November 8, 2012
Bulk Dates:	2012
Physical Description:	5 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:25:48).
Abstract:	Chemist Joseph Gordon, II (1945 - 2013) is credited with twelve United States patents for developing solid liquid interface technologies and the battery materials research programs for IBM ThinkPad computers. Gordon was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 8, 2012, in San Jose, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2012_242
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Research chemist and research manager Joseph Grover Gordon, II, was born on December 25, 1945 in Nashville, Tennessee to Joseph Grover, Sr. Juanita Elizabeth (Tarlton) Gordon. He is one of four children, including Eric Rodney, Craig Stephen, and Rhea Juanita. After briefly attending Atkins High School in North Carolina, Gordon went on to graduate from the prestigious Phillips Exeter Academy in 1963. Gordon earned his A.B. degree in chemistry and physics from Harvard College in 1966. He received his Ph.D. in inorganic chemistry from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1970.

After finishing his graduate education, Gordon worked at the California Institute of Technology as an assistant professor in the Chemistry Department. In 1975, he began working as a research staff member at Almaden Research Center (IBM Research) and was promoted to interfacial electrochemistry manager in IBM's Applied Materials Division in 1990. There, Gordon managed a research staff team and contributed greatly to the fields of materials science and electrochemistry. Between 1975 and 1994, Gordon established a program in fundamental electrochemistry that developed solid: liquid interface. From 2004 to 2009 Gordon Developed an exploratory battery materials research program and evaluated new battery technology for ThinkPad strategic planning in Raleigh, North Carolina and development in Yamato, Japan. In 2009, Gordon was hired as the senior director for the advanced technology group in at Applied Materials, Inc. Throughout his career, Gordon has published numerous research papers in leading scientific journals, such as *Physical Review Letters* and *Sensors and Actuators A: Physical*.

Gordon is a member of several professional organizations, including the American Chemical Society, Society for Analytical Chemistry, Electrochemical Society, and the National Research Council. Throughout his career, Gordon has shown a continued commitment to scientific research and has credited with twelve United States Patents. Gordon has been recognized many times for his work. In 1993, he was awarded the Black Engineer for Outstanding technical Achievement, and in 1993 the National Organization of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers awarded Gordon the Percy L. Julian Award. Gordon and his wife, Ruth M., reside in San Jose, California. Joseph G. Gordon, II was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on November 7, 2012.

Joseph Gordon passed away on September 13, 2013.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Joseph Gordon, II was conducted by Larry Crowe on November 8, 2012, in San Jose, California, and was recorded on 5 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Chemist Joseph Gordon, II (1945 - 2013) is credited with twelve United States patents for developing solid liquid interface technologies and the battery materials research programs for IBM ThinkPad computers.

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:

Gordon, J. G. (Joseph G.)

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Gordon, J. G. (Joseph G.)--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Almaden Research Center (IBM Research)

Applied Materials (Firm)

Occupations:

Chemist

HistoryMakers® Category:

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 Joseph Gordon, II, November 8, 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 Joseph Gordon, II, Section
A2012_242_001_001, TRT: 1:28:35 2012/11/08

Joseph Gordon describes his family history. His mother, Juanita Gordon, was born in November 1921 in Sumter, South Carolina. She is of Berber, American Indian, Sub-Saharan African and Caucasian descent. After graduating with a degree in English from St. Augustine's College in Raleigh, North Carolina, she served as a secretary for Chicago's Manhattan Project during World War II. She remained a housewife after she started having children. His father, Joseph Gordon, was born in March 1923 in Jamaica. He attended St. Augustine's College, where he met his wife, and the University of Chicago for pre-med classes. He then received his MD from Meharry Medical College, in Nashville, Tennessee. Gordon was born in Nashville, Tennessee in 1945 and moved frequently during his early years. Gordon talks about his childhood and his parents' personalities.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

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Video Oral History Interview with Joseph Gordon, II, Section

A2012_242_001_002, TRT: 2:29:02 2012/11/08

Joseph Gordon grew up, primarily, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, although he moved frequently during the earliest part of his life. He describes his neighborhood and his experiences growing up during the Civil Rights Movement. After graduating from St. Benedict the Moor Elementary School in 1958, Gordon attended Atkins High School for his first two years. He then transferred to Phillips Exeter Academy, which is a boarding school located in Exeter, New Hampshire. He remembers experiencing culture shock upon his arrival. Out of 240 students, there were only three African American students. Despite his fears and his cultural differences, Gordon managed to establish friendships at Exeter and participated in various sports during his time there.

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Video Oral History Interview with Joseph Gordon, II, Section
A2012_242_001_003, TRT: 3:29:12 2012/11/08

Joseph Gordon attended Phillips Exeter Academy for his last two years of high school. He describes the social and economic environment of his high school. Gordon graduated from Exeter in 1963 and went on to attend Harvard University. He made efforts to participate in the Civil Rights Movement during school breaks. Gordon majored in physics and chemistry and was initially interested in becoming a theoretical chemist. However, after a discussion with one of his advisors, he was dissuaded from pursuing that path. Due to his advanced placement credits from high school, Gordon graduated from Harvard University with his B.A. degree in physics and chemistry one year early, in 1966. He then attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he earned his Ph.D. in inorganic chemistry in 1970. Gordon then accepted a teaching position at the California Institute of Technology.

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Video Oral History Interview with Joseph Gordon, II, Section
A2012_242_001_004, TRT: 4:31:12 2012/11/08

Joseph Gordon graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1970 with his Ph.D. in inorganic chemistry. Gordon then served as an assistant professor in the chemistry department at the California Institute of Technology from 1970 until 1975. During his time at Caltech, he was drafted into the Navy, which interrupted his research program, and also married his wife. In 1975, Gordon was hired as a technical staff manager at IBM. There, he developed a program in electrochemistry that contributed to the understanding of electroless copper-plating reactions. In 1984, Gordon received the IBM Research Division Award for his contributions to improving the printed wiring process. In 1990, Gordon was promoted to manager of the materials science department at IBM. His research focused on understanding solid-liquid interface. Finally, Gordon discusses how his racial ambiguity often repelled overt racial aggressions throughout his life, education and, particularly, in his professional career.

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Video Oral History Interview with Joseph Gordon, II, Section
A2012_242_001_005, TRT: 5:27:47 2012/11/08

Joseph Gordon describes his career trajectory and his professional activities. From 2004 to 2009, Gordon was appointed to several management positions at IBM. During that time, Gordon developed a battery materials research program and was involved in analyzing technical standards of their products. In 2009, Gordon was hired as

senior director at Advanced Materials Incorporated. He discusses his professional goals and reflects upon his life and career accomplishments. Finally, Gordon describes his family photos.

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