

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Evan Forde

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Forde, Evan B.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Evan Forde,
Dates:	June 3, 2013
Bulk Dates:	2013
Physical Description:	9 MOV HD video files (4:14:51).
Abstract:	Oceanographer Evan Forde (1952 -) became an oceanographer at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory (AOML) in Miami, Florida in 1973, and was the first African American scientist to participate in research dives aboard a submersible. He remains one of only a handful of black oceanographers in the United States. Forde was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 3, 2013, in Key Biscayne, Florida. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2013_137
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Oceanographer Evan B. Forde was born on May 11, 1952 in Miami, Florida and received his early education in the Miami Public School System. Forde earned his B.A. degree in geology with an oceanography specialty and his M.A. degree in marine geology and geophysics from Columbia University in the City of New York.

In 1973, Forde became an oceanographer at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory (AOML) in Miami, Florida. He was the first African American scientist to participate in research dives aboard a submersible and completed successful dive expeditions in several submarine canyons utilizing three of these submersible vessels. Forde remains one of only a handful of African American oceanographers in the United States. Forde has conducted research in a number of oceanographic and meteorological disciplines and has been a versatile pioneer in scientific research. His current research includes using satellite sensors to observe and analyze atmospheric conditions related to improving hurricane forecasting and improving intensity prediction models.

Forde has also worked extensively in the area of science education. He created and taught a graduate level course on tropical meteorology for the University of Miami's INSTAR program for seven years. Forde also created and teaches an oceanography course for middle school students called Oceanographic Curriculum Empowering Achievement in Natural Sciences (OCEANS) that has been featured in nationally distributed periodicals and web sites. He originated and authored the "Science Corner" in Ebony Jr! magazine for three years, and later created a Severe Weather Poster for NOAA that was distributed nationally to 50,000 teachers

Forde has spoken to more than 40,000 students during career days and other presentations. Forde has also been the subject of museum exhibits, including the Great Explorations section of the Staten Island Children's Museum. He has been featured in numerous periodicals, text books and many other publications on prominent African

American scientists. Forde has also served as a PTA President, Scoutmaster, youth basketball coach, Sunday School and youth church teacher, church webmaster, neighborhood Crime Watch chairman, official photographer for the South Florida Special Olympics (eleven years) and in numerous other roles that have helped foster youth and improve his community.

Forde has a host of career and civic awards that include being named NOAA's Environmental Research Laboratories EEO Outstanding Employee, South Florida's Federal Employee of the Year (Service to the Community), a U.S. Congressional Commendation, and NOAA Research Employee of the Year. In 2009, he had days named in his honor by both the City of North Miami and Miami-Dade County, Florida and in 2010, the Miami-Dade County School Board issued a proclamation honoring Forde's contributions to students--citing his ongoing efforts to enhance public education. Forde was the recipient of the NOAA Administrator (Under Secretary of Commerce) Award in 2011 for his: outstanding communication of NOAA science, sharing the joy of science with students, and helping to foster a science-literate society.

Evan B. Forde was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on June 3, 2013.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Evan Forde was conducted by Larry Crowe on June 3, 2013, in Key Biscayne, Florida, and was recorded on 9 MOV HD video files. Oceanographer Evan Forde (1952 -) became an oceanographer at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory (AOML) in Miami, Florida in 1973, and was the first African American scientist to participate in research dives aboard a submersible. He remains one of only a handful of black oceanographers in the United States.

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:

Forde, Evan B.

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Forde, Evan B.--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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 Evan Forde, June 3, 2013. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 8/20/2013 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, June 3, 2013

Video Oral History Interview with Evan Forde, Section A2013_137_001_001, TRT: 1:28:29
2013/06/03

Evan Forde describes his family background. His mother, Margaret Carey Forde, was born in Miami, Florida on April 4th, 1930. Her father was born in Eleuthera, the Bahamas. Samuel James Evan Forde the Second, Forde's father, was born April 17th, 1927 in Green Coves, Florida. His father was born in Barbados and moved to the United States, becoming one of the first African American physicians in Florida. Because his grandfather left his grandmother, Forde's father had to drop out of high school to help support the family. He enlisted in the Army during World War II and afterwards was able to attend and graduate from Florida A and M University in Tallahassee, Florida. Forde's father worked as a surgical technician and later as a teacher in order to support his family. Forde discusses his parents' personalities and remarks that he takes after his father the most.

African American families--Florida.

Caribbean Area--Emigration and immigration.

African American physicians--Florida.

World War, 1939-1945--Participation, African American.

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University--Alumni and alumnae.

Video Oral History Interview with Evan Forde, Section A2013_137_001_002, TRT: 2:30:53
2013/06/03

Evan Forde describes his earliest childhood memory. He talks about his sibling, his older sister Bernadette and younger brother Kevin. Forde had a younger sister named Valerie but she died from a traumatic brain injury when he was young. His father, Samuel James Evan Forde the Second, was very involved in the community and known as Mr. Wizard because of his vast knowledge. As a child Forde felt deserted whenever his mother left him, causing him to have behavioral issues. Forde talks about church and faith growing up. He remembers when he received his first "A," which was for spelling in the sixth grade. Being a member in the Boy Scouts of America inspired Forde to join the junior high band and play the trumpet. Forde soon was the best trumpet player in the band, the result of his hard work.

Childhood--Florida--1952-1965.

Brothers and sisters--Family relationships.

African American fathers--Conduct of life--Florida.

Problem children.

Boy Scouts--Florida.

Video Oral History Interview with Evan Forde, Section A2013_137_001_003, TRT: 3:30:01
2013/06/03

Evan Forde talks about his father's, Samuel James Evan Forde, positions at North Dade Junior-Senior High School in Bunch Park, Florida, where he served as the head of the science department, the athletic director, and as the business manager. He describes his accomplishments during summer he spent at Camp Sebring in Avon Park, Florida, as a Boy Scout. Forde attended the primarily white Carol City High School in Miami Gardens, Florida two years after integration of the school. In 1968 Forde was seriously burned when his house

caught on fire and the experience influenced him to quit band and join the football team. Although Forde did not play in many games because he had trouble learning the plays, he was a strong player on the scout team and received several offers of football scholarships by the time he graduated from high school.

African American educators--Florida.

Boy Scouts--Florida.

School integration--Florida.

Burns and scalds in children--Psychological aspects.

High school football players--Florida.

Video Oral History Interview with Evan Forde, Section A2013_137_001_004, TRT: 4:32:02
2013/06/03

Evan Forde talks about the difficulties he had with a teacher and counselor at his high school. Forde's interest in oceanography started in a high school course on environmental oceanography. Forde graduated from high school in 1970 and was accepted into Columbia University in New York, New York. His first semester at Columbia University Forde was which placed on academic probation due to poor grades, but he soon recovered. During his junior year Forde obtained a summer job at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Miami, Florida. Forde remembers the geology course he took with Dr. John Sanders which sparked his interest in geology. After graduating from Columbia University in 1974, Forde received a phone call from Dr. John Sanders and was accepted into the graduate program for geology at Columbia University on the spot.

African American students--Counseling in higher education--Florida.

Oceanography--Vocational guidance.

Columbia University.

United States. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Geology--Study and teaching--New York (State)--New York.

Video Oral History Interview with Evan Forde, Section A2013_137_001_005, TRT: 5:30:34
2013/06/03

Evan Forde talks about receiving his master's degree in 1976 from Columbia University, New York, New York. After completing his qualifying exam a professor challenged his degree because he had chosen to answer questions outside of his concentration, marine geology and geophysics. However, his advisor, Dr. John Sanders, talked to the department and ensured his degree. Forde's master's thesis on the mapping submarine canyons and landslides off the coast of Maryland led to the canceling of oil drilling in the area. However, the supervisor of the vessel he was on, 'The Researcher,' took credit for the discovery. He describes how his efforts to be recognized for his work were unsuccessful and the care he took on his next paper, which was nominated for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Paper of the Year. In 1979 Evan Forde was the first African American oceanography to conduct research aboard a submersible vessel.

Degrees, Academic--New York (State)--New York.

Columbia University--Faculty advisors.

African Americans--Oceanographic submersibles.

Video Oral History Interview with Evan Forde, Section A2013_137_001_006, TRT: 6:29:45
2013/06/03

Evan Forde describes his first submersible dive, which was to the Wilmington Submarine Canyon on the Nekton Gamma in 1979. During that dive the line connecting them to the mothership was cut but they were still able to return to the ship. Forde talks about what it is like to be on a submersible dive. On a dive in the submersible Alvin Forde and the pilot were covered by a land slide but managed to maneuver back to the surface. Forde discusses his most memorable discoveries from the submersible dives, which included a new species of anemones, ninety-degree angle canyon walls, and underwater debris flows. Forde also talks about the prevailing theory behind the existence of mid-Atlantic submarine canyons, that they resulted from the breakup of the continent of North America and Europe, which he created.

Oceanographic submersibles.

Underwater exploration.

Submarine canyons--Atlantic Coast (North America).

Video Oral History Interview with Evan Forde, Section A2013_137_001_007, TRT: 7:29:18
2013/06/03

Evan Forde shares how he got involved with science education and talks about the demand for his school visits. He talks about the need for scientists who can communicate in plain language. In 1979 Forde was featured as the most eligible bachelor for 'Ebony Magazine,' which led him to write science-related content for 'Ebony Jr.' in 1980. At the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Forde shifted his research from marine geology and geophysics to satellite remote sensing, where he studied hurricanes and tropical storms. He also became more involved in outreach, eventually resigning as Chairman of the Oceanic and Atmospheric Research Department to focus on public outreach. Forde started the project that produced the NOAA severe weather posters, which were distributed to fifty thousand teachers.

Science--Study and teaching--United States.

African Americans--Periodicals.

United States. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Environmental monitoring--United States.

Video Oral History Interview with Evan Forde, Section A2013_137_001_008, TRT: 8:29:18
2013/06/03

Evan Forde describes how he created the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration public outreach posters. He produced seventy thousand posters in 2004 on severe weather for school teachers in record time. In 2001 Forde created curricula focused on high school students called OCEANS, Oceanic Curriculum Empowering Achievement in Natural Sciences. He also taught a graduate tropical meteorology course for science teachers through the University of Miami, Miami, Florida's Investigating Nature Through Science Teacher Active Research (INSTAR). Forde talks about the greatest educational speech he had ever given, which was to children at a library. He describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community. Forde also reflects on his life and talks about his family, including the death of his father, Samuel James Evan Forde, and his cousin.

United States. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration--Public relations.

Weather--Posters--United States.

Oceanography--Study and teaching (Secondary)--United States.

Tropical meteorology--Study and teaching (Graduate)--Florida--Miami.

African American families.

Video Oral History Interview with Evan Forde, Section A2013_137_001_009, TRT: 9:14:31
2013/06/03

Evan Forde discusses his father's, Samuel James Evan Forde, influence on his life and his parent's pride when he graduated from graduate school at Columbia University in 1976. He talks about his community service in science education and the 2009 Evan Forde Day. He reflects on how he would like to be remembered. Forde also discusses his research on how Saharan air layers affect the formation of hurricanes.

African American fathers--Influence.

African American parents.

Volunteer workers in education.

Air masses--Sahara.

Marine meteorology--Atlantic Ocean.