

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Frederic Bertley

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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>	Bertley, Frederic M. N., 1970-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Frederic Bertley,
<b>Dates:</b>	June 18, 2013
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2013
<b>Physical Description:</b>	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:39:07).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Museum president and health researcher Frederic Bertley (1970 - ) , founder and director of the Color of Science Program and the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MACSP), served as vice president of the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Bertley was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 18, 2013, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2013_149
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Museum president and health researcher Frederic Bertley was born in Montreal, Canada in 1970. His father, Leo Bertley, served as professor of history at Vanier College, as editor of the newspaper *Afro-Can*, and author of *Anglophone Blacks in Quebec*; his mother, June Bertley, was the founder and president of the Quebec Task Force on Immigrant Women. Bertley graduated from McGill University with his B.Sc. degree in physiology and mathematics in 1994, and his Ph.D. degree in immunology in 1999. From 2000 to 2003, Bertley served as postdoctoral research

fellow in development of an HIV vaccine at the Harvard University Medical School and the Children's Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts.

In 1993, Bertley was named International Project Manager for the International Development Research Council (IDRC). While there, he provided clinical and technical support for researchers in Sudan, Africa and in Haiti, West Indies. After teaching at Northeastern University, Bertley joined Roxbury Community College in 2006 where he directed the Louis Stokes Alliance Membership Program, the Bridges and the Boston Science Partnership (BSP) programs. He was also recruited by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to serve as director of the Research Experience for Undergraduates program. In 2008, Bertley was named vice president of the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He also serves as director of the Franklin Center, director of the Franklin Awards Program, and executive director of the *Journal of The Franklin Institute*.

Bertley was also the founder and director of the Color of Science Program and the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MACSP). He has published research in numerous academic scientific journals including the *Journal of Immunology*, *Nature of Medicine*, *Diagnostic Microbiology & Infectious Disease*, and the *Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal*. Bertley also co-authored the monographs, *Absence of Immunologic Injury Following High titer Vaccination in the Sudan*, *From West Philly to the White House: The Story of the Franklin Institute's Partnership for Achieving Careers in Technology and Science (PACTS)*, and *The Power of 3 Months: The Positive Impact of a Basic Science Research Internship of Underrepresented Minority Students*.

Bertley served on the board of directors of the Philadelphia Biotech Life Sciences Institute (PBLSI), the Garvey Institute, Inc., and the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative. He is a member of the Quebec Black Medical Association and served as a mentor for the Bell Science Foundation. Bertley is a recipient of the Dean's Service Award from Harvard Medical School and the Dell Inspire 100 World Changers Award. He was also named to the *Philadelphia Business Journal's* "40 Under 40" list. Bertley has keynoted or been an invited speaker at numerous venues including the White House, the U.S. Department of Interior, and the United Nations.

Frederic Bertley was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on Jun 18, 2013.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Frederic Bertley was conducted by Larry

Crowe on June 18, 2013, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Museum president and health researcher Frederic Bertley (1970 - ) , founder and director of the Color of Science Program and the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MACSP), served as vice president of the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

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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:**

Bertley, Frederic M. N., 1970-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

## **Subjects:**

African Americans--Interviews

Bertley, Frederic M. N., 1970---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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## **Occupations:**

Museum President

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Health Researcher

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

EducationMakers|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 Frederic Bertley, June 18, 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 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).

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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 Frederic Bertley, Section A2013\_149\_001\_001, TRT: 1:28:36 2013/06/18

Frederic Bertley slates his interview and lists his favorites. His mother, June Alleyne Miller, was born June 29th, 1929 in Barbados. Her mother, who was a Hall, received Cambridge exam certificates around 1910 as did many of her siblings and her father ran a pharmacy. She attended McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, and received four degrees. Bertley's father, Leo Withnol Bertley, was born in 1934 in Pointe-a-Pierre, Trinidad. Bertley shares an urban legend that his great-grandfather was a Yoruba king who flew using supernatural powers from Nigeria to Trinidad in the 1800s. Bertley's paternal grandfather worked for Shell Oil in Trinidad and his father attended Presentation College, a private high school in San Fernando, Trinidad. His father then attended McGill University, where he met Bertley's mother, and received seven degrees, including a Ph.D. degree in history. He

talks about his parents' involvement in the Universal Negro Improvement Association.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Affirmative action programs.

Video Oral History Interview with Frederic Bertley, Section  
A2013\_149\_001\_002, TRT: 2:28:13 2013/06/18

Frederic Bertley talks about how his parents, Leo Withnol Bertley and June Alleyne Miller, met during the Quiet Revolution in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. He also describes his parents' personalities and who he takes after. Bertley has three older siblings, Deborah, John, and Albert. His oldest sister, Deborah, died in 1989 at the age of thirty from breast cancer. All of his siblings attended McGill University in Montreal, as did Bertley himself, the same university their parents attended. Bertley discusses his family debates and his earliest memory of having his head cut by a machete at the age of three. Bertley grew up in Pierrefonds, Quebec, Canada and he describes the racial discrimination he and his family faced. As a teenager Bertley attended Cooper's Sport Camp for hockey and was named the most valuable player despite the prejudice of his peers. Bertley also shares his experience being called racist by a Portuguese neighbor for having pictures of Africans and African Americans on his walls.

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Video Oral History Interview with Frederic Bertley, Section  
A2013\_149\_001\_003, TRT: 3:29:14 2013/06/18

Frederic Bertley describes the sights, sounds, and smells of his childhood in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. In 1976 Bertley attended College Ste. Marcelline, a Catholic French private school in Montreal with a rigorous

academic program. Bertley's parents, June Alleyne Miller and Leo Withnol Bertley, are Catholic but his family attended Union United Church, which was predominately African Canadian. They were also involved in the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in Montreal and Bertley attended the UNIA camper both as a camper and as a counselor. In 1981 Bertley's parents founded the Garvey Institute in Montreal, the first Afrocentric private school in Canada. Bertley also has created the Philadelphia Chapter of the Garvey Institute in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Bertley mentions his interest in science while in public school and underlines the importance of his parents' mentoring.

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Video Oral History Interview with Frederic Bertley, Section A2013\_149\_001\_004, TRT: 4:29:24 2013/06/18

Frederic Bertley talks about his high school education. He attended Vanier College in Montreal, Quebec, Canada for Cegep, a two year education between high school and college in the Canadian system. His father, Leo Withnol Bertley, was a professor there, and Bertley talks about taking his father's courses and his other mentors at Vanier College. Bertley applied to historically black colleges and universities in the United States but his parents hid the award letters until he applied to two Canadian Universities. His father required him to attend McGill University in Montreal, as his whole family had attended McGill University. Bertley started his education at McGill University in 1989 and fell in love with immunology research while working in Dr. Wayne Lapp's laboratory. In 1993 Bertley was selected by John Hopkins University to be a summer research assistant in Haiti for a vaccine follow-up study.

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Video Oral History Interview with Frederic Bertley, Section  
A2013\_149\_001\_005, TRT: 5:30:51 2013/06/18

Frederic Bertley talks about his time as a research assistant and dealing with culture shock in Sudan, where he assisted in a follow-up study to measles vaccination. Bertley graduated from his undergraduate education at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada in 1994 and immediately started his doctoral education at the same university. His doctoral dissertation involved examining the long term effects of high doses of the measles vaccine, which was immunosuppressive and could thus indirectly lead to death. Also while a doctoral student Bertley studied the Epstein-Barr virus' earlier occurrence in infants among Inuit populations in northern Canada. Bertley received his Ph.D. degree from McGill University in 1999. Upon graduation Bertley became a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. At Harvard University Bertley researched the potential of using HIV DNA as a vaccine against HIV, which was successful in monkey trials but unsuccessful in human trials.

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Video Oral History Interview with Frederic Bertley, Section  
A2013\_149\_001\_006, TRT: 6:29:08 2013/06/18

Frederic Bertley talks about beginning to teach in STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) fields at Roxbury Community College and Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. He was also involved in the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative in Boston. From 2000 to 2004 the Harvard University research group that Bertley was a postdoctoral fellow at published a series of papers on using HIV DNA to develop vaccines for HIV. In



2004 Bertley became a technology specialist as WilmerHale, LLP in Washington, D.C., where he advised patent lawyers on intellectual property. Bertley talks about how he met his wife, Heather, while he was at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. He became a professor at Roxbury Community College and research affiliate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 2006. Bertley explains why he chose not to start a research laboratory or to continue in a research focused career.

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Video Oral History Interview with Frederic Bertley, Section A2013\_149\_001\_007, TRT: 7:28:39 2013/06/18

Frederic Bertley describes how he was recruited by the Franklin Institute, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and how he became the senior vice president for science. He talks about the history and legacy of the Franklin Institute as well as the demographics of its staff. At the Franklin Institute Bertley is the editor of the 'Journal of the Franklin Institute' and oversees the Science Solution Academy, the awards program, and public outreach. Bertley reflects on his professional legacy and shares his philosophy on science education. He also details his plans for the Garvey Institute and the new Garvey Institute Chapter he has started in Philadelphia.

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Video Oral History Interview with Frederic Bertley, Section A2013\_149\_001\_008, TRT: 8:15:02 2013/06/18

Frederic Bertley discusses the Philadelphia Chapter of the Garvey Institute and remembers taking his mother, June

Alleyne Miller, to the Universal Negro Improvement Association building in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 2010. He describes his hopes and concerns for the African American Community. Bertley also talks about his wife, Heather, and his stepdaughter and shares his philosophy on science education. He reflects on his life, legacy, and how he would like to be remembered.

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