

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. James Rosser, Jr.

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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>	Rosser, James C., 1954-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dr. James Rosser, Jr.,
<b>Dates:</b>	June 4, 2013
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2013
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:29:00).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Hospital chief executive and medical professor Dr. James Rosser, Jr. (1954 - ) served as the chief of minimally invasive surgery and director of the Advanced Medical Technology Institute at the Beth Israel Medical Center in New York City. Rosser was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 4, 2013, in Celebration, Florida. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2013_177
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Hospital chief executive and medical professor James C. Rosser, Jr. was born on September 14, 1954 in Rome, Mississippi. He attended James C. Rosser Elementary school and graduated from Gentry High School in 1971. After briefly attending the University of Florida, Rosser enrolled in the University of Mississippi and graduated from there with his B.A. degree in chemistry and biology in 1974. He received his M.D. degree from the University of Mississippi School of Medicine in 1980. Rosser then completed his surgical residency at Akron General Medical Center where he served as chief resident from 1984 to

1985.

Upon completion of his residency, Rosser began an academic/private surgical practice at Akron General Medical Center and accepted a position as assistant professor of surgery at Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine. In addition, Rosser was appointed as assistant professor of surgery at the Yale University School of Medicine, and as professor of surgery at the Albert Einstein School of Medicine. His hospital appointments include Academic Medical Center in Amsterdam, Netherlands and St. Francis Hospital in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. From 1994 to 2002, Rosser served as chief of videoendoscopic surgery at Yale-New Haven Hospital. Then, in 2002, he was named chief of minimally invasive surgery and director of the Advanced Medical technology Institute at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York City.

Rosser has given more than 350 invited lectures around the world on topics ranging from education to remote control surgery. He has written over fifty peer-reviewed articles, sixteen chapters in books currently in print, and eleven digital books. He holds two patents and he has been credited with the development of several products and appliances. For his efforts, Dr. Rosser has received numerous recognitions and awards, including the NAACP Living Legend Award in Medicine, the National Role Model Award from Minority Access, Inc., the SAGES Gerald Marks Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Society of Laparoscopic Surgeons' EXCEL award.

Rosser is married to Dana Mitchell Rosser. They have five children: Kevin S. Rosser, Duane C. Rosser, Angela N. Rosser, Taylor E. Rosser, and Tianna M. Rosser.

James C. Rosser, Jr. was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on June 4, 2013.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dr. James Rosser, Jr. was conducted by Larry Crowe on June 4, 2013, in Celebration, Florida, and was recorded on 5 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Hospital chief executive and medical professor Dr. James Rosser, Jr. (1954 - ) served as the chief of minimally invasive surgery and director of the Advanced Medical Technology Institute at the Beth Israel Medical Center in New York City.

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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:

Rosser, James C., 1954-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

## **Organizations:**

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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## **Occupations:**

Medical Professor

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Hospital Chief Executive

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

EducationMakers|MedicalMakers

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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 Dr. James Rosser, Jr., June 4, 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 Dr. James Rosser, Jr., Section A2013\_177\_001\_001, TRT: 1:31:39 2013/06/04

Dr. James Rosser, Jr. was born in Rome, Mississippi on September 14, 1954 to Marjorie Mitchell Rosser and James Rosser, Sr. His maternal grandfather, Ludie Mitchell, worked as a butcher in a company store on a plantation near Rome, where Rosser's mother was born in 1929. They later moved to the Delta Pine Land plantation in Scott, Mississippi. His grandfather valued education and sent Rosser's mother to college, where she studied to become a teacher. Rosser's father was born in 1925 near Jackson, Tennessee, where his family owned land. Years later, Rosser's paternal grandfather died from a respiratory illness, which was caused by exposure to mustard gas during combat in World War I. Rosser's father served in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II, and went on to become a school principal. Rosser grew up in Moorhead, Mississippi, where his parents were among the first African Americans to vote during the Civil Rights Movement.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. James Rosser, Jr., Section A2013\_177\_001\_002, TRT: 2:29:25 2013/06/04

Dr. James Rosser, Jr.'s father, James Rosser, Sr., attended high school at Rust College in Holly Springs, Mississippi. He left before graduating to join the U.S. Marine Corps,

and served in the Pacific Theater of World War II. He then returned home with an injured leg, and earned a degree from Rust College. Rosser's father became an elementary school principal in Rome, Mississippi, where he met Rosser's mother, who taught the first grade. They married and moved to Moorhead, Mississippi, where they raised four children, including Rosser. He was influenced from a young age by his parents and maternal grandparents, who valued education. At this point in the interview, Rosser describes the community of Moorhead, which was strictly segregated and mostly African American. Because of its location as a railway hub, the town became a stop on the Chitlin' Circuit. It was also the hometown of blues musician B.B. King.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. James Rosser, Jr., Section A2013\_177\_001\_003, TRT: 3:29:48 2013/06/04

Dr. James Rosser, Jr. was interested in science and medicine from an early age. He was influenced by a local doctor as well as comic books and television, especially Marvel Comics and 'Star Trek,' which depicted racial integration. He completed a kindergarten program at Mississippi Valley State University, and then enrolled at the East Moorhead School, where he received support from his first grade teacher, Ms. Johnson. During this time, Rosser's family was actively involved in the Civil Rights Movement. His parents were acquainted with Fannie Lou Hamer, and were among the first African American citizens of Moorhead, Mississippi to register to vote following the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. As a result, Rosser's family faced threats and violence from both whites and blacks. They often left town to visit his paternal grandmother, Hattie Rosser, in Memphis, Tennessee, where he experienced life outside of rural Mississippi for the first time.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. James Rosser, Jr., Section A2013\_177\_001\_004, TRT: 4:28:53 2013/06/04

Dr. James Rosser, Jr., attended Gentry High School in Indianola, Mississippi. While the school district was nominally integrated, it was predominantly black and consistently underfunded, as the city's white students attended a private academy. Due to the lack of resources at

Gentry High School, Rosser and many of his African American peers were underprepared for college. Even so, the faculty were supportive, and Rosser excelled in academics and athletics. He graduated near the top of his class at the age of sixteen years old, and aspired to play football for the University of Mississippi; but the team refused to admit a black player, so he accepted a football scholarship to attend the University of Florida in 1971. The following year, the University of Mississippi allowed African American students to join the football team, and Rosser transferred to the school in hopes of playing. However, his focus shifted to academics, and he graduated early and enrolled at the University of Mississippi School of Medicine.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. James Rosser, Jr., Section A2013\_177\_001\_005, TRT: 5:29:15 2013/06/04

Dr. James Rosser, Jr. enrolled at the University of Mississippi School of Medicine at the age of twenty years old, with support from minority affairs director Peter H. Stewart. His wife, Dana Rosser, had recently given birth to their first child, and initially Rosser struggled to balance the demands of schoolwork and fatherhood. He eventually became successful; and, after graduating one year early, enrolled at the Brompton Cardiothoracic Institute in London, England. Upon returning to Mississippi, Rosser was encouraged by Dr. James Hardy to become a surgeon. He completed his residency at the Akron General Medical Center in Ohio, where he worked with Dr. Douglas Evans. Rosser then began his practice in Akron, and developed an interest in laparoscopic surgery. He worked with Dr. Herbert Awender, whose father was a pioneer of laparoscopy, to learn the technique. Rosser then dedicated his career to training new surgeons, inventing more effective and ergonomic tools and developing new pedagogical methods.