

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. James Hill

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Hill, James A., 1949-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dr. James Hill,
Dates:	August 19, 2013
Bulk Dates:	2013
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:00:53).
Abstract:	Orthopedic surgeon Dr. James Hill (1949 -) served as a professor in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, and as the chief of staff for Northwestern Memorial Hospital from 2006 to 2008. Hill was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 19, 2013, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2013_236
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Orthopaedic surgeon and professor Dr. James A. Hill graduated from Lane Technical High School in 1967. He went on to receive his B.A. degree in biology from Northwestern University in 1971 and his M.D. degree from the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine in 1974. After completing an internship at Evanston Hospital in 1975 and his residency training in orthopaedic surgery at McGaw Medical Center of Northwestern University in 1979, Hill served a one-year fellowship in sports medicine with the National Athletic Institute of Health. In 1980, Hill was recruited as an instructor in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. Between 1982 and 1994, he was promoted through the faculty ranks at the Feinberg School of Medicine. He was later appointed as a full professor of orthopaedic surgery in 1994. During his tenure at Northwestern University, Hill served on several university committees, including as a member of the Admissions Committee from 1982 to 1989; chair of the Motion Analysis Laboratory Implementation Committee from 1982 to 1984; co-director of the Center for Sports Medicine in 1982; and a member of the Minority Affairs Advisory Committee in 1989. Hill also served as a Major in the U.S. Army Reserves in 1985. He has provided medical care for both amateur and professional athletes and was the physician for the United States Olympic Team in Seoul, Korea in 1988. Later, Hill served as an attending physician at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, at Cook County Hospital, Children's Memorial Hospital and the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. During his tenure at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Hill served on the Nominating Committee; as chair of the Medical Executive Committee in 2006; and as the hospital's chief of staff from 2006 to 2008.

Hill has made hundreds of professional presentations and published papers in more than fifty-five medical journals, including *Journal of Back and Musculoskeletal Rehabilitation* and *Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery*. He has received numerous awards, including being honored in 2006 by Health for Humanity for leadership in improving cultural competency within the medical profession and global health. Hill was inducted in the inaugural class of the Northwestern University Black Alumni Association Hall of Fame (2007). He also received the Icon Award from the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boys and Girls Club of Chicago (2008), and was honored by The Monarch Awards

Foundation of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.'s Xi Nu Omega Chapter (2009).

Hill and his wife, Sandra Hill, have three children and one grandchild.

Dr. James A. Hill was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on August 20, 2013.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dr. James Hill was conducted by Denise Gines on August 19, 2013, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Orthopedic surgeon Dr. James Hill (1949 -) served as a professor in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, and as the chief of staff for Northwestern Memorial Hospital from 2006 to 2008.

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:

Hill, James A., 1949-

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Hill, James A., 1949- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Orthopedic Surgeon

HistoryMakers® Category:

MedicalMakers

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 Hill, August 19, 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 5/30/2023 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 Dr. James Hill, Section A2013_236_001_001, TRT: 1:14:01 ?
Dr. James Hill was born on September 14, 1949 at Provident Hospital in

Chicago, Illinois—the first black-owned and operated hospital established in the United States. His mother, Doretha Lowe, was born in Bolton, Mississippi, a one-block town in between Jackson and Vicksburg, Mississippi. Lowe was born out of wedlock and raised by her grandmother, Rosa Lee McCraven. Hill's father, James Allen Hill, was also born in Bolton, Mississippi into a family of sharecroppers. Hill's paternal grandfather, Charlie Hill migrated north from Mississippi to work in northern stockyards during the Great Depression. He earned enough money to purchase land and traveled back south to purchase and work his own farm. Hill's paternal grandmother, Alberta Hill was a strict disciplinarian and worked as a school teacher. Hill's parents married and migrated to Chicago before his birth. Hill, however, spent every summer until he was thirteen years old in Bolton, Mississippi.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. James Hill, Section A2013_236_001_002, TRT: 2:18:43 ?

Dr. James Hill shares his paternal family history. Hill's grandfather purchased land in Bolton, Mississippi in 1927 where he built a house, which was still standing at the time of the interview. Hill describes the two-bedroom home and its surrounding area. In the 1940s, Hill's father, James Allen Hill, left Bolton to work at Campbell Soup Company in Upstate New York before moving to Chicago, Illinois. He later sent for Hill's mother, Doretha Hill. They married in City Hall and lived on the South Side Chicago in the Bronzeville neighborhood. In the 1950s, the family moved to Chicago's West Side. Hill describes the differences between the South and West Sides and his earliest childhood memories, including childhood trips from Chicago to segregated Mississippi. In 1958, Our Lady of the Angels School in Chicago caught fire, leading to multiple injuries and deaths. As Hill watched the aftermath on television, he decided that he wanted to become a physician.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. James Hill, Section A2013_236_001_003, TRT: 3:29:56 ?

Dr. James Hill grew up on the West Side of Chicago, Illinois in the 1950s, during white flight. He recalls spending his childhood within ten blocks of his family's home and occasionally sleeping parked at the airport on hot summer nights, when it was too hot to sleep at home. Hill also spent significant time at the Boys Club, where he received mentorship from Northwestern University students. Hill attended Beidler Elementary School. He was a good student and favored by most teachers aside from having difficulty reading phonetically. Hill recalls another student, the son of a gang leader, hiding a gun in his desk during an inspection. Hill's desk was not inspected and in gratitude for keeping the leader's son out of trouble, the gang never targeted his family. Hill also recalls a story of getting into trouble after writing a rude note to the gang member's aunt as well as the sights, sounds and smells of his childhood. He also talks about his family traditions and religious upbringing.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. James Hill, Section A2013_236_001_004, TRT: 4:29:13 ?

Dr. James Hill describes the cancellation of his reunion for Beidler Elementary School in Chicago, Illinois due to the low number of possible black male attendees. After Beidler, Hill attended Lane Technical College Preparatory High School. At the time, Lane Tech was a predominantly white institution. Hill's father initially opposed his admission given the discrimination he might be subjected to, but let him attend anyway. Hill describes his experience at Lane Tech as well as a white librarian who treated him as a surrogate son. He also describes being inspired by black physicians such as Daniel Hale Williams. Hill was in high school at the height of the Civil Rights Movement and recalls his parents' attitudes toward the movement, John F. Kennedy's assassination, and Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King's 1965 move to Chicago. Hill did not receive

good counseling at Lane Tech, but he was recruited by Northwestern University and offered full financial aid, which he accepted. He enrolled in 1967 and studied biology.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. James Hill, Section A2013_236_001_005, TRT: 5:28:16 ?

Dr. James Hill describes his interest in science as an undergraduate student. Hill also talks about meeting and marrying his wife at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois during their sophomore year. While in school, Hill worked at the post office and rented an apartment on Chicago, Illinois' North Side. Hill completed his undergraduate studies in three years and was admitted to Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. Though he had not applied, his professors advocated for him to prevent him from being drafted into the Vietnam War. During medical school, Hill worked full time and missed classes, which prompted a professor to threaten to fail him. Hill recalls his fellow students at Feinberg and describes handling discrimination from professors. He recalls taking his family to see a cadaver in his anatomy lab and talks about the significance of organic chemistry to medical students. By the end of medical school, Hill elected to specialize in orthopaedics rather than neurosurgery.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. James Hill, Section A2013_236_001_006, TRT: 6:29:39 ?

Dr. James Hill remembers being racially profiled and arrested in the 1980s in Chicago, Illinois. Hill also talks about his medical rotations at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Cook County Hospital, and others. After completing his orthopaedic residency at Northwestern Memorial, he completed post-graduate training in sports medicine in California. At the behest of his mentor, William J. Kane, Hill returned to Chicago in 1980, where he practiced orthopaedics and taught at Feinberg School of Medicine. He describes his duties as an attending physician and talks about papers he has published. He describes his clientele and the positions he held throughout the hospital as well as at the medical school, including as hospital chief of staff. He explains the function of Northwestern Health Care Corporation. Hill, HistoryMakers Dr. Augustus White and Dr. Carlton West, along with other black orthopaedic surgeons, founded the J. Robert Gladden Society to promote diversity in orthopaedics.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. James Hill, Section A2013_236_001_007, TRT: 7:31:05 ?

Dr. James Hill talks about being licensed to practice medicine in four states. He also recalls making a volunteer trip to Ethiopia in the late 1980s. While there, he wrote an article about patient care in war situations. He lived at a hospital in Addis Ababa and was rarely able to leave. Hill describes the state of orthopaedics at the time of the interview. Total joint replacements had increased significantly since he entered the field, although there were still large disparities in terms of the race of the patients. Hill also explains how doctors estimate how long knee replacements will last. He talks about the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, HistoryMakers and fellow orthopaedic surgeons, Dr. Augustus White and Dr. Carlton West, and reflects on the importance of culturally competent care. He talks about his wife and children and what they have taught him. He also reflects upon his life, future plans and legacy. He concludes by offering a message to future generations.