

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Drew Berry

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Berry, Drew, 1955-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Drew Berry,
Dates:	December 4, 2013 and March 22, 2014
Bulk Dates:	2013 and 2014
Physical Description:	9 uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:06:52).
Abstract:	Media executive Drew Berry (1955 -) served as vice president and general manager at WMAR-TV in Baltimore, Maryland, and as professor of media management at the Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communication at Hampton University. Berry was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 4, 2013 and March 22, 2014, in Bel Air, Maryland. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2013_312
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Media executive and consultant Drew Berry was born on December 22, 1955 in Henderson, Texas. He grew up in Dallas, Texas and graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with his B.S. degree in radio, television and film in 1978.

Upon graduation, Berry was hired at WVUE-TV Austin, Texas, an ABC Affiliate. He was then hired by two more ABC-TV affiliates in both San Antonio, Texas and then New Orleans, Louisiana before joining CNN in its infancy. After a short stint

at CNN, in 1980 he was lured to WPVI-TV in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to produce two of its number-one rated newscasts. In 1987, he was promoted within the same company to producer and then executive producer at WABC-TV in New York City.

Berry took an opportunity to return to Philadelphia in 1990 in management for WCAU-TV, a CBS television station. After a few months as assistant news director he was promoted to run the entire news department as news director, where he earned two Emmys for “Outstanding Newscasts” from the Mid-Atlantic National Association for Television Arts and Sciences and where his team elevated the station’s newscast to a solid number two in ratings. In 1994, Berry returned to Dallas, Texas, where he became assistant news director at WFAA-TV, the top-rated station in Dallas. It was there that Berry led a thirty-two-person remote on-site team covering the bombing in Oklahoma City of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building.

In 1997, Berry was hired as station manager and news director of WMAR-TV in Baltimore, Maryland. Berry was named vice president and general manager in 2000. In 2007, he left the station to teach media management at the Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communication at Hampton University, and also became founding president and CEO of Drew Berry & Associates, LLC, a media and consulting agency.

Berry is an active community leader. He has held positions on many business and community service boards and committees including the Comcast/NBC Diversity Council, Scripps Howard Foundation, Greater Baltimore Committee, the Maryland Business Council, the Signal 13 Foundation, Associated Black Charities, the Maryland Humanities Council, the Enoch Pratt Library System, the Baltimore Area Convention and Visitors Association, the Good Samaritan Hospital and MedStar Health. As a member of the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ), Berry has served on the finance committee, as consultant, and as interim executive director in 2009, and is credited with a one-million dollar positive revenue turnaround for NABJ in just nine months.

Berry was recognized with the State of Maryland Governor’s Citation in 2002 for excellence in broadcasting, and the Congressional Achievement Award in 2004 for business achievement. He received the President’s Award from the National Association of Black Journalists in 2009 and 2010.

Berry is married to Brenda Fowler-Berry, a chemical engineer. They have three children: Andrea, Adam and Andrew.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Drew Berry was conducted by Larry Crowe on December 4, 2013 and March 22, 2014, in Bel Air, Maryland, and was recorded on 9 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Media executive Drew Berry (1955 -) served as vice president and general manager at WMAR-TV in Baltimore, Maryland, and as professor of media management at the Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communication at Hampton University.

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:

Berry, Drew, 1955-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Berry, Drew, 1955---Interviews

African American executives--Interviews.

African American television producers and directors--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Media Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

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 Drew Berry, December 4, 2013 and March 22, 2014. 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 Drew Berry, Section
A2013_312_001_001, TRT: 1:28:40 2013/12/04

Drew Berry describes his family background. His mother, Clementine Southall, was born in Dallas, Texas in 1929. His father, Calvin Charles Berry, Jr., was born in Kerens, Texas in 1930. Both of Berry's parents were the children of ministers. They met at Emmett J. Scott High School in Tyler, Texas although neither of them graduated from high school due to Berry's mother's pregnancy. Berry's mother

spent most of her marriage as a housewife while his father worked as a minister after receiving an honorable discharge from the U.S. Army. Berry talks about his grandfather, Calvin Charles Berry, Sr. who was the Presiding Bishop of the Church of the Living God, and his grandmother, Sammie Berry who he remembers as a feisty spirit. Berry describes growing up in Dallas, how hard his parents worked to make ends meet, and the entrepreneurial spirit of his father.

African American families--Texas.

Education, Secondary--Texas--Dallas.

African American ministers--Texas.

United States--Armed Forces--African Americans.

Video Oral History Interview with Drew Berry, Section
A2013_312_001_002, TRT: 2:31:57 2013/12/04

Drew Berry talks about his father's military service in the U.S. Army, his parents' personalities, and his close relationship with his four siblings, Calvin, Steven, Linda, and Cynthia. He has fond memories of growing up in a predominantly African American neighborhood in Oak Cliff, Dallas, Texas, and shares the sights, sounds, and smells of his childhood. From the time he was a young boy, Berry has had a love for the game of football. He remembers sneaking out of church to follow the Dallas Cowboys' Sunday games as well as playing football at South Oak Cliff High School. Berry also describes the effect on him of the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy, which occurred while Berry was a student at Albert Sidney Johnston Elementary School.

United States--Armed Forces--African Americans.

African American families--Texas--Dallas.

African American neighborhoods--Texas--Dallas.

Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963--
Assassination.

Football--United States.

Video Oral History Interview with Drew Berry, Section
A2013_312_001_003, TRT: 3:29:18 2013/12/04

Drew Berry discusses the transformation of television news reporting after John F. Kennedy's assassination in

1963 as well as how he was raised and disciplined as a child, and its effect on his own parenting style. Berry attended South Oak Cliff High School in Dallas, Texas where he was a good student and developed an interest in writing and film making before graduating in 1974. Berry talks about Iola Johnson, the first African American female anchor in Dallas, Texas, the effects of the 1973 oil crisis in his community, and notable Texan politicians including Congresswoman Barbara Jordan. Berry describes his decision to attend the University of Texas at Austin where he worked as a reporter-trainee at KVUE, a local ABC affiliate, to finance his college tuition, and the academic challenges he encountered at university. He graduated from the University of Texas at Austin in 1978 with his B.S. degree in radio, television, and film studies. African American parents.

Childhood and youth--Texas--Dallas.

Johnson, Iola.

Jordan, Barbara, 1936-1996.

University of Texas at Austin.

Broadcasting--Study and teaching.

Video Oral History Interview with Drew Berry, Section
A2013_312_001_004, TRT: 4:29:56 2013/12/04

Drew Berry describes his career as a television producer and how he became a successful executive producer. Berry learned producing at KVUE in Austin, Texas before going to KSAT-TV in 1978 in San Antonio, Texas where he worked in live television. He was then recruited to WVUE-TV in New Orleans, Louisiana where he learned an important lesson about how to motivate and manage his staff before joining the newly opened CNN in Atlanta, Georgia in 1981. Berry then moved on to WPVI-TV in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where he had enjoyed a great relationship with anchor Jim Gardner, before a promotion took Berry to WABC-TV in New York City, New York. Berry also describes TV sweeps and his first encounter with unionized employees in New York City.

African American television producers and directors--Texas.

Television broadcasting--Texas.

Cable News Network--Georgia--Atlanta.

WABC-TV (Television station : New York, N.Y.).

Labor unions--New York (State)--New York.

Video Oral History Interview with Drew Berry, Section
A2013_312_001_005, TRT: 5:29:13 2013/12/04

Drew Berry continues to describe working as a producer with WABC-TV in New York City, New York. He worked there from 1987 to 1990. During this time, he overcame initial tensions to establish a working relationship with the union. Then, in 1990, Berry became the general manager of WCAU-TV in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, quickly rising to the position of news director within months. Under Berry's direction, WCAU-TV was nominated for forty-five Emmy Awards, largely on the strength of its consumer units. Berry also won two Emmys for news reporting. He talks about the sweeps periods and the Nielsen ratings system, as well as the issues involved with having a proper division between editorial and advertising sales.

WCAU-TV (Television station : Philadelphia, Pa.).

WABC-TV (Television station : New York, N.Y.).

African American television producers and directors.

Emmy Awards.

Video Oral History Interview with Drew Berry, Section
A2013_312_002_006, TRT: 6:29:33 2014/03/22

Tape 6 through 9 are part of session 1. All tapes are transcribed but tapes 6-9 were not segmented or published to THMDA.

Video Oral History Interview with Drew Berry, Section
A2013_312_002_007, TRT: 7:29:03 2014/03/22

Tape 6 through 9 are part of session 1. All tapes are transcribed but tapes 6-9 were not segmented or published to THMDA.

Video Oral History Interview with Drew Berry, Section
A2013_312_002_008, TRT: 8:29:16 2014/03/22

Tape 6 through 9 are part of session 1. All tapes are transcribed but tapes 6-9 were not segmented or published

to THMDA

Video Oral History Interview with Drew Berry, Section
A2013_312_002_009, TRT: 9:09:56 2014/03/22

Drew Berry narrates his photographs.

Photographs.