

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Jerry Rushin

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Rushin, Jerry J., 1947-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Jerry Rushin,
Dates:	September 9, 2014
Bulk Dates:	2014
Physical Description:	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:42:16).
Abstract:	Radio station manager Jerry Rushin (1947 -) became the general manager WEDR Radio station in Miami, Florida in 1980. He later served as the vice president and market manager for the Cox Media Group's South Florida radio stations. Rushin was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 9, 2014, in Hollywood, Florida. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2014_212
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Radio station manager Jerry J. Rushin was born on May 21, 1947 in the State of Georgia. When he was a child, his family moved to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, where he was raised. Rushin's father was a truck driver; his mother, a part-time housekeeper. Rushin attended Dillard High School and enlisted in the U.S. Army after graduation where he served for three years, including a two-year tour in Vietnam.

Upon returning from Vietnam, Rushin worked in a furniture store and was

promoted to manager. He then enrolled in Lindsey Hopkins Technical Educational Center in Miami, Florida and was hired as a part-time board engineer at WEDR-FM while taking a six-month course in radio broadcasting. In 1973, he became a part-time on-air personality and hosted the “Super Jerry J” show on weekends. Rushin was soon promoted as a full-time radio host and later to program director and sales representative for WEDR in 1975. In 1980, he was appointed general manager of the station, becoming the first African American in South Florida to operate a radio station. While general manager, Rushin increased WEDR’s signal from 16,000 watts to 100,000 watts, and, in 1992, the station became the top rated radio station in the Miami-Ft. Lauderdale area.

In 2000, Cox Media Group purchased WEDR and Rushin was subsequently named vice president and market manager for the corporation’s South Florida radio stations, which included WHQT, WFEZ, WFLC and WEDR. He retired in 2012.

Rushin’s honors include the National Black Programmers Coalition 1995 General Manager of the Year award, the “Living Legend Award” from Black Radio Exclusive, and the Excalibur Award from the Family Christian Association of America. In addition, Rushin served on the board of directors of the Nat Moore Foundation.

Jerry Rushin was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on September 9, 2014.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Jerry Rushin was conducted by Larry Crowe on September 9, 2014, in Hollywood, Florida, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Radio station manager Jerry Rushin (1947 -) became the general manager WEDR Radio station in Miami, Florida in 1980. He later served as the vice president and market manager for the Cox Media Group’s South Florida radio stations.

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:

Rushin, Jerry J., 1947-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Champagne, Curt (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Rushin, Jerry J., 1947---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

Occupations:

Radio Station Manager

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 Jerry Rushin, September 9, 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 Jerry Rushin, Section
A2014_212_001_001, TRT: 1:29:36 2014/09/09

Jerry Rushin was born on May 21, 1947 in Eastman, Georgia to Louise Edmondson Rushin and Johnnie Rushin, Sr. His maternal great-grandfather was white, and his great-grandmother had white, African American and Native American ancestry. Their daughter, Willie Edmondson, married Alonzo Edmondson, and settled in an integrated, working class neighborhood in Eastman. There, Rushin's grandmother worked as a domestic for the prominent Stuckey family, who were the owners of Stuckey's Corporation. Rushin's father was born to a family of sharecroppers in Eufaula, Alabama. After an altercation between Rushin's paternal grandfather and the white landowner, he and Rushin's father fled from Eufala to escape being lynched. They settled in Eastman, where they changed their surname from Avery to Rushin. Rushin was born in Eastman, and moved with his family to Fort Lauderdale, Florida when he was one year old. There, Rushin's father worked as a truck driver for the Causeway Lumber Company.

Video Oral History Interview with Jerry Rushin, Section
A2014_212_001_002, TRT: 2:29:02 2014/09/09

Jerry Rushin was one of six children born to Louise Edmondson Rushin and Johnnie Rushin, Sr. He initially lived with his family in a poor, integrated neighborhood of Eastman, Georgia. When he was one year old, they moved to Fort Lauderdale, Florida. There, Rushin was looked after by the Coleys, a white couple who owned the local grocery store. In Fort Lauderdale, Rushin attended Clarence C. Walker Elementary School and Lincoln Park Elementary School. He worked on the school's Lincoln Park Tiny Pen newspaper, and became an avid reader. Rushin went on to attend Dillard High School. There, he

once retaliated against classmates who bullied him, and was mentored by his teacher, Mr. Getty, on the proper way to react. Around this time, two large homes were built in Rushin's neighborhood. One of the houses was owned by a doctor, and the other was built by the local radio disc jockey Luther Holland. Inspired by their success, Rushin decided to pursue a career in either medicine or broadcasting.

Video Oral History Interview with Jerry Rushin, Section
A2014_212_001_003, TRT: 3:28:50 2014/09/09

Jerry Rushin grew up in Fort Lauderdale, Florida during the 1950s and 1960s. He listened to African American radio hosts like Luther Holland on WFTL Radio, which broadcast from West Palm Beach, Florida. Rushin attended Clarence C. Walker Elementary School in Fort Lauderdale, where he excelled in reading. He graduated from Dillard High School in 1965. To avoid the draft, Rushin volunteered for the U.S. Army, and was sent to basic training at Fort Jackson in Columbia, South Carolina. From there, he spent two years in Vietnam as part of the medical detachment for the 117th Assault Helicopter Company. At the end of his service, Rushin enrolled in the broadcasting program at Lindsey Hopkins Technical College in Miami, Florida. While in school, he worked part time at WEDR Radio in Miami, where he initially served as a board engineer. He became a disc jockey after the station transitioned to a black format in 1970.

Video Oral History Interview with Jerry Rushin, Section
A2014_212_001_004, TRT: 4:30:09 2014/09/09

Jerry Rushin became a full time disc jockey at WEDR Radio in Miami, Florida in 1973. He initially used the stage name Super Jerry J, and switched to the name Mr. J after losing a bet with his fellow disc jockeys. During his early years as a host, Rushin was responsible for the morning show on WEDR Radio. He transitioned to the midday programs over the years. His shows included interviews with recording artists and discussions of current events, as well as recent hit songs and classics like B.B. King and Smokey Robinson. In 1975, Rushin became the program director at WEDR Radio. In this role,

he lodged a harassment complaint against one of his superiors, which resulted in his dismissal. Rushin was then promoted to general manager. In the 1990s, Rushin built a new radio tower for the station, which strengthened its signal and allowed the channel to reach more listeners. He also remembers meeting stars like James Brown, MC Hammer and P. Diddy at the station.

Video Oral History Interview with Jerry Rushin, Section
A2014_212_001_005, TRT: 5:31:31 2014/09/09

Jerry Rushin was the general manager of WEDR Radio in Miami, Florida. When the station was acquired by the Cox Media Group, he also became the manager of WHQT Radio in Coral Gables, Florida. In 1990, Rushin purchased WRBD Radio in Pompano Beach, Florida in partnership with Cox Media Group. That same year, he changed the WEDR Radio's slogan from Starforce 99 to 99 Jamz, and introduced reggae and rap music programs. Outside of work, Rushin organized demonstrations on behalf of Haitian refugees. At this point, Rushin reflects upon his career, and talks about the murder of Trayvon Martin in 2012. He also remembers his friendship with Arthur McDuffie, who was beaten to death by four white Miami police officers in 1979. After the officers were declared not guilty, the Miami community rioted against the city government and police force. Around that time, there were numerous incidents of police brutality in the Miami area, including the beating of Nathaniel LaFleur and the death of Nevell Johnson, Jr.

Video Oral History Interview with Jerry Rushin, Section
A2014_212_001_006, TRT: 6:13:08 2014/09/09

Jerry Rushin retired from the Cox Media Group and sold his ownership of WEDR Radio in 2012. At this point, Rushin talks about his membership in the National Black Programmers Coalition, and his plans to write an editorial column for a local newspaper in Miami, Florida. At the time of the interview, Rushin had three daughters and five grandchildren. He reflects upon his life and legacy, and concludes the interview by describing how he would like to be remembered.