

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Charles W. Cherry II

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Cherry, Charles W. (Charles William), 1956-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Charles W. Cherry II,
Dates:	September 7, 2014
Bulk Dates:	2014
Physical Description:	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:32:54).
Abstract:	Publisher, radio station manager, and lawyer Charles W. Cherry II (1956 -) is the publisher of the 'Florida Courier' newspaper. He also served as vice president, secretary and general counsel of Tama Broadcasting, Inc, and as a city and state prosecutor in South Florida. He is the author of Excellence Without Excuse: The Black Student's Guide to Academic Excellence. Cherry was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 7, 2014, in Miami, Florida. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2014_230
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Publisher, radio station manager and lawyer Charles W. Cherry II was born in 1956 in Daytona Beach, Florida to Julia T. Cherry and Charles W. Cherry, Sr., founder of the *Daytona Times* and *Florida Courier* newspapers. In 1978, Cherry received his B.A. degree in journalism from Morehouse College, where he also interned for WAGA-TV in Atlanta, Georgia. He then went on to receive both his M.B.A. and J.D. degrees from the University of Florida in 1982.

Cherry had his own law firm for twenty-one years and served as a city prosecutor for Fort Lauderdale, Florida and as a state prosecutor in South Florida. He also served as general counsel for the Housing Authority of the City of Fort Lauderdale, where he worked closely with its former executive director, the late Dr. William H. Lindsay. In 1989, Cherry and his father purchased WPUL-AM 1590, a Daytona Beach-area radio station. From 1998 to 2000, he served as general manager of Greenville, South Carolina's WCSZ-AM. In 2000, Cherry was named general manager of WPUL-AM and became host of the station's *Free Your Mind* radio show.

In 2004, upon the death of his father, Cherry returned to journalism and newspaper publishing. In 2006, the Cherry family re-launched the *Florida Courier* as a statewide newspaper; Cherry became its publisher and his column, *Straight, No Chaser* appeared weekly. He also went on to write commentaries, editorials, and stories for his other family-owned newspaper, the *Daytona Times*. In addition, Cherry served as vice president, secretary and general counsel of his family's Tama Broadcasting, Inc., as well as vice president of corporate communications for Global Health Professionals, Inc.

Cherry published *Excellence Without Excuse: The Black Student's Guide to Academic Excellence* (1994), which has been used as a textbook in college-preparation classes and seminars. He was elected to the board of directors of the National Newspaper Publishers Association in 2009, and served on the Government Affairs Committee of the Florida Press Association. He also founded the Florida Black-Owned Media Coalition, Inc., a trade association representing Florida mass media owned by African Americans.

Charles W. Cherry II was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on September 7, 2014.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Charles W. Cherry II was conducted by Larry Crowe on September 7, 2014, in Miami, Florida, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Publisher, radio station manager, and lawyer Charles W. Cherry II (1956 -) is the publisher of the 'Florida Courier' newspaper. He also served as vice president, secretary and general counsel of Tama Broadcasting, Inc, and as a city and state prosecutor in South Florida. He is the author of *Excellence Without Excuse: The Black Student's Guide to Academic Excellence*.

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:

Cherry, Charles W. (Charles William), 1956-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Champagne, Curt (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Cherry, Charles W. (Charles William), 1956---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Publisher

Radio Station Manager

Lawyer

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 Charles W. Cherry II, September 7, 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 Charles W. Cherry II, Section A2014_230_001_001, TRT: 1:28:18 2014/09/07

Charles W. Cherry II was born on August 6, 1956 in Daytona Beach, Florida. His mother, Julia Troutman Cherry, was born in 1927 and raised in Leslie, Georgia. She attended Morris Brown College in Atlanta, Georgia and taught in the Daytona Beach school system. Cherry's maternal grandmother raised his mother and aunt on her own after the death of his grandfather. His father, Charles William Cherry, Sr., was born in Americus, Georgia in 1928. Cherry, Sr. graduated from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia in 1949 and earned his M.A. degree in accounting from Alabama State University in Montgomery, Alabama. He worked as the business manager for Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach, Florida. Cherry describes the Barlow family, the maternal ancestors of Cherry, Sr. His maternal aunts also earned graduate degrees and set an example in education for the family. Cherry's parents met at A.S. Staley High School in Americus, Georgia.

Video Oral History Interview with Charles W. Cherry II, Section A2014_230_001_002, TRT: 2:29:10 2014/09/07

Charles W. Cherry II was raised in Daytona Beach, Florida and describes the sights, sounds, and smells of his childhood. Cherry's father, Charles Cherry, Sr., owned various businesses, including a bail bond business, a real estate brokerage, and two newspapers—the Westside Rapper, established in 1969, and the Daytona Times, successor to the Westside Rapper, in 1978. Cherry, Sr. knew Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. from his time at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, and was also a local civil rights activist. He was able to express his opinions without fear of retribution because of the financial freedom his businesses afforded him. In 1967, Cherry participated in a “wade-in” his father organized to desegregate the beach in Daytona Beach. Cherry and his siblings continue to own and operate the media company his father started. Cherry talks about how his parents met, his earliest childhood memory, his likeness to his parents', and his two siblings, HistoryMaker Dr. Glenn W. Cherry and a sister.

Video Oral History Interview with Charles W. Cherry II, Section
A2014_230_001_003, TRT: 3:29:59 2014/09/07

Charles W. Cherry II began school at Campbell Elementary School in Daytona Beach, Florida, an all-black school, and remembers an influential first grade teacher. When he was in the fourth grade, Campbell was closed due to desegregation. His parents then sent him to St. Paul's Catholic School, though his family was not religious. In 1972, he started tenth grade at Seabreeze High School in Daytona Beach, a newly integrated school which was still ninety percent white. Cherry describes his experience with discrimination in high school, and the disadvantages of integration. Cherry's father, Charles W. Cherry, Sr., was active in the Civil Rights Movement and planned a march to protest the Apollo Space Missions, which Dr. Ralph Abernathy attended. His father's activities made Cherry's house the target of violence as a child. Cherry talks about reading the World Book Encyclopedia as a child and his father's entrepreneurship.

Video Oral History Interview with Charles W. Cherry II, Section
A2014_230_001_004, TRT: 4:28:30 2014/09/07

Charles W. Cherry II attended Father Lopez High School in Daytona Beach, Florida before transferring to Seabreeze High School, where he graduated from in 1975. Cherry opted to transfer schools, feeling isolated from his black friends. He attended Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. He had an excellent psychology professor, HistoryMaker Dr. Na'im Akbar, but chose to major in journalism. Cherry's interest in journalism stemmed from high school and the newspaper his father published, the Westside Rapper. Cherry interned at WAGA TV in Atlanta for his last two and half years in college, but rejected the station's offer of a full-time position working for minimum wage. He graduated from Morehouse College in 1978 and accepted a full-scholarship to the University of Florida Law School in Gainesville, Florida. Cherry talks about the impact of racism on mental health, the night of his high school graduation, and a friend's transfer out of Morehouse College due to sexual harassment.

Video Oral History Interview with Charles W. Cherry II, Section A2014_230_001_005, TRT: 5:30:36 2014/09/07

Charles W. Cherry II earned his B.A. degree in journalism from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia in 1978. He worked on the school newspaper and ran track with Olympic gold medalist Edwin Moses. Cherry earned a joint law and business degree from the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida in 1982. Graduate school was the first time Cherry struggled academically, but he received academic support from other black students. His first job out of college was as a state prosecutor in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Cherry was inspired by his academic struggles in college and the disproportionate number of black men prosecuted to write his book 'Excellence without Excuses: A Black Student's Guide to Academic Excellence' in 1993. Cherry worked as outside counsel for the Fort Lauderdale Housing Authority, to rid the public housing projects of drug dealers. Cherry briefly describes his father's newspapers; the Daytona Times, successor to the Westside Rapper, started in 1978 and the Florida Courier started in 1987.

Video Oral History Interview with Charles W. Cherry II, Section A2014_230_001_006, TRT: 6:28:44 2014/09/07

Charles W. Cherry II worked for ten years as the outside counsel for Fort Lauderdale Housing Authority where he developed an interest in innovative ways to make public housing safer. In 1989, he, his brother, HistoryMaker Dr. Glenn W. Cherry, and his father purchased WPUL AM, a local radio station in Daytona Beach, Florida, with financing from his Omega Psi Phi Fraternity brothers; Cherry was named general manager of WPUL. The original station with WPUL was Psi Communications. The Cherry's formed Tama Broadcasting and between 1998 and 2000 bought a total of eleven radio stations. In 2004, they sold Tama Broadcasting, but still own two radio stations and two newspapers. From 2000 to 2012, Cherry had a weekly talk show, "Free Your Mind" featuring national and local current events. Cherry talks about how a visit to Senegal inspired him to change the way he dressed and how changes in the media industry have made it harder to operate a small local radio station.

Video Oral History Interview with Charles W. Cherry II, Section A2014_230_001_007, TRT: 7:28:44 2014/09/07

Charles W. Cherry II talks about the production of his papers, the Florida Courier and Daytona Times. Though both papers are still published in print, most of the production takes place digitally. Cherry talks about the changing media landscape and shares his thoughts on how newspapers may change in the future to reach African Americans who increasingly use their cell phones as the primary source of news. In 2012, Cherry was one of the first media outlets to pick up the story of Trayvon Martin's murder. Cherry talks about publishing diverse views from the African American community and the value in printing unpopular positions. Cherry talks about Florida's Stand Your Ground law, HistoryMaker Barack Obama's presidency, Eric Holder's tenure, political trends in Florida's African American community, and the problems in Daytona Beach, Florida's African American community. Cherry also describes working on a second book, 'Grief and Words,' and pursuing business opportunities in Africa.

Video Oral History Interview with Charles W. Cherry II, Section A2014_230_001_008, TRT: 8:08:53 2014/09/07

Charles W. Cherry II is married to Lisa Rogers Cherry. The couple has two children, Chayla and Charles. Cherry reflects on his legacy and what in his life and career he would do differently.