

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with C. Bernard Fulp

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Fulp, Cyrus Bernard, 1935-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with C. Bernard Fulp,
Dates:	October 21, 2016
Bulk Dates:	2016
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:19:21).
Abstract:	Bank executive C. Bernard Fulp (1935 -) was the executive vice president of private banking for the Bank of New England, as well as the founding president of Middlesex Bank and Trust and GoBiz Solutions, Inc. Fulp was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 21, 2016, in Boston, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2016_076
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Bank executive C. Bernard Fulp was born on October 9, 1935 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina to Amanda Murray Fulp and Cyrus Fulp. Fulp graduated from Atkins High School in Winston-Salem in 1953, and received his B.S. degree in elementary education from Winston-Salem State University in 1957. Fulp then served in the U.S. Air Force until 1962, and went on to earn his M.A. degree in education from the University of Connecticut in Storrs, Connecticut in 1963. He also completed a program in management development at the Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration in 1978.

Fulp began his career in banking as a loan manager at the Wachovia Bank and Trust Company branch in Winston-Salem in 1964. He also worked at State Street Bank and Trust Company and Unity Bank and Trust Company before joining the New England Merchants National Bank in 1970, where he eventually worked his way up to the position of senior vice president. In this role, he was responsible for the bank's emerging middle market group. When New England Merchants National Bank merged with The CBT Corporation in 1983, creating the Bank of New England – then the second largest bank in New England – Fulp was promoted to executive vice president in charge of the bank's private banking division, making him the first African American to assume the role. Fulp left the Bank of New England after it was acquired by FleetBoston Financial in 1991. He then worked for the accounting and advisory firm of Grant Thornton LLP until 1994 when he co-founded Middlesex Bank and Trust in Newton, Massachusetts. Fulp led Middlesex Bank until 2002, when it was acquired by Connecticut's Westport National Bank. In 2004, Fulp became the president of GoBiz Solutions, Inc.

Fulp received numerous awards, including the 2005 Mary Hudson Onley Achievement Award from the Massachusetts Hall of Black Achievement. He served on the Small Business Administration Boston Advisory Council from 1972 to 1982. Fulp was named by Governor Deval L. Patrick to the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, and chaired its Fiscal and Administrative Affairs Committee. He served as a member of the Lesley University Board of Trustees, and on the board of directors for the American Red Cross of Massachusetts Bay, the Massachusetts Technology Leadership Council, and The Ron Burton Foundation.

Fulp is married to Carol Fulp, and has three children: Deanna, Rachael, and Cyrus.

C. Bernard Fulp was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on October 21, 2016.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with C. Bernard Fulp was conducted by Larry Crowe on October 21, 2016, in Boston, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Bank executive C. Bernard Fulp (1935 -) was the executive vice president of private banking for the Bank of New England, as well as the founding president of Middlesex Bank and Trust and GoBiz Solutions, Inc.

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:

Fulp, Cyrus Bernard, 1935-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Bank Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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 C. Bernard Fulp, October 21, 2016. 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 C. Bernard Fulp, Section
A2016_076_001_001, TRT: 1:32:05 2016/10/21

C. Bernard Fulp was born on October 9, 1935 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina to Amanda Murray Williams and Cyrus Fulp. His paternal grandfather, Orren Fulp, owned a 300-acre tobacco farm in Belews Creek, North Carolina. He also grew corn and fruit trees, and sold the timber that grew on the property. He used his wealth to found a church and build the Mount Sinai Cemetery, where he and his descendants were buried. Fulp's maternal grandparents, Mary Davis Murray and Calvin Murray, worked in Winston-Salem's tobacco factories, and his maternal aunt, Ella Murray Whitworth, was the family's first college graduate. Fulp's parents met in Winston-Salem, and raised seven children in the East Winston community. The area was home to numerous black professors and teachers, some of whom taught at the 14th Street School, where Fulp began his education. The community had a vibrant black business district located on Church Street, which was serviced by the black-owned Safe Bus Company.

Video Oral History Interview with C. Bernard Fulp, Section
A2016_076_001_002, TRT: 2:31:06 2016/10/21

C. Bernard Fulp began his education at the 14th Street School in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. At Atkins High

School, Fulp learned geometry from Togo West, Sr., whose son, Togo D. West, Jr., became the U.S. secretary of the army. In Winston-Salem, Fulp's father worked for the Snyder Lumber Company, while his mother was a homemaker and occasionally worked in the tobacco industry. Fulp's family attended Winston-Salem's Mount Zion Baptist Church, which was led by Reverend Kelly Oliver Perry Goodwin. To earn extra money, Fulp worked as a dishwasher and delivered the Winston-Salem Journal. In 1953, he enrolled at Winston-Salem Teachers College (WSTC), a historically black institution. At the time, many of the students were veterans of the Korean War, who were barred from attending the segregated University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. At this point, Fulp remembers his classmate, Minister Louis Farrakhan, who left WTSC to focus on his career as a calypso singer.

Video Oral History Interview with C. Bernard Fulp, Section
A2016_076_001_003, TRT: 3:30:31 2016/10/21

C. Bernard Fulp attended the Winston-Salem Teachers College in North Carolina, where he studied education and joined the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. After graduation, he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. He served with the 717th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron at the Tatalina Air Force Station and the Elmendorf Air Force Base in Alaska. When Gary Powers' spy plane was shot down over Russia in 1960, Fulp's base was put on red alert due to its proximity to the enemy country. Near the end of his service, Fulp applied to graduate programs. He went on to study at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, where he earned a master's degree in education in 1963. Around this time, the Wachovia Bank and Trust Company initiated a recruitment and training program for African American managers. Fulp was inspired by the success of black branch managers Roy Phillips and Roland Hayes, and became a loan manager for the Wachovia Bank and Trust Company in 1964.

Video Oral History Interview with C. Bernard Fulp, Section
A2016_076_001_004, TRT: 4:29:51 2016/10/21

C. Bernard Fulp began his banking career in 1964 as a loan manager at the Wachovia Bank and Trust Company branch in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The next year,

he joined the State Street Bank and Trust Company in 1965, where he sold and installed BankAmericard systems across New England. In 1967, Fulp was appointed as assistant treasurer by the State Street Bank and Trust Company's board of directors. Fulp went on to join the black-owned Unity Bank and Trust Company, which was founded in Boston's Roxbury neighborhood and based on the ideas of black economist John T. Hayden. Fulp left the company after being recruited by the president of New England Merchants National Bank. There, he established a small business lending program, and became a district branch manager. Fulp was reassigned to wealthier districts as he gained experience, and eventually became a vice president, although the board denied him further promotions because of his race. In 1978, he earned a master's degree from Harvard Business School.

Video Oral History Interview with C. Bernard Fulp, Section A2016_076_001_005, TRT: 5:29:02 2016/10/21

C. Bernard Fulp studied at Harvard Business School, and befriended members of his cohort like CEO Frederick A. Wang of Wang Laboratories. After graduating in 1978, Fulp was promoted to senior vice president of retail banking at the New England Merchants National Bank, which became part of the Bank of New England Corporation after a series of mergers and acquisitions. In 1988, Fulp was promoted to executive vice president of the private banking division. He continued in that position until 1991, when the Bank of New England Corporation was forced into bankruptcy and acquired by the Fleet Norstar Financial Group, Inc. At that time, Fulp transitioned to the accounting and advisory firm of Grant Thornton LLP. In 1994, Fulp cofounded the Middlesex Bank and Trust Company in Newton, Massachusetts with capital funding from Affiliated Community Bancorp, Inc. The bank was acquired by the Westport National Bank in 2002, and then became part of the Eastern Bank in 2003.

Video Oral History Interview with C. Bernard Fulp, Section A2016_076_001_006, TRT: 6:29:04 2016/10/21

C. Bernard Fulp became the president of GoBiz Solutions, Inc. in 2004. The company created software for small businesses that automated online sales and inventory

functions. Headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, GoBiz Solutions, Inc. was founded by several of Fulp's business associates and friends, who were involved in the technology startup industry. Additionally, Fulp served on the board of viNGN, Inc., a public corporation that developed the broadband infrastructure for the U.S. Virgin Islands. He was also a member of the Massachusetts Technology Leadership Council and the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, where he advocated for the founding of the University of Massachusetts School of Law in Dartmouth, Massachusetts. At this point, Fulp describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community. He also talks about his family, including his wife, Carol Fulp, whom he married in 2000. He concludes this part of the interview by reflecting upon his life.

Video Oral History Interview with C. Bernard Fulp, Section
A2016_076_001_007, TRT: 7:17:42 2016/10/21

C. Bernard Fulp reflects upon his legacy, and concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.