

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Timothy Francis

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Francis, Timothy B.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Timothy Francis,
Dates:	May 23, 2017
Bulk Dates:	2017
Physical Description:	5 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:05:22).
Abstract:	Lawyer Timothy Francis (1958 -), lawyer with the New Orleans law firm of Sher, Garner, Cahill, Richter, Klein & Hilbert L.L.C., legislative assistant and counsel to a U.S. Senator and chief operating officer of Stevie Wonder Enterprises. Francis was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 23, 2017, in New Orleans, Louisiana. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2017_104
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Lawyer Timothy Francis was born on April 17, 1958 in New Orleans, Louisiana to Norman Francis and Blanche Francis. He received his B.A. degree from Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1980, and his J.D. degree from Tulane University Law School in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1984.

Prior to receiving his J.D. degree, Francis served as an assistant to Moon Landrieu, the secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Development in Washington, D.C. While in Washington, D.C., Francis worked on research

projects, and reviewed and recommended projects for funding under the Urban Development Action Grant program. Following his graduation from Tulane University, Francis practiced law with the firm of McGlinchey Stanford. He then returned to Washington, D.C. to serve as a legislative assistant and counsel to U.S. Senator John Breaux. In this position, Francis served as an advisor on numerous legislative issues, including banking, urban affairs, housing, labor, civil rights, and health issues. In 1989, Francis moved to Los Angeles, California to become the chief operating officer of Stevie Wonder Enterprises. He managed the company's daily operations, including film production, music publishing, and marketing. Francis also negotiated licensing, endorsements, and publishing agreements, in addition to providing financial and strategic analyses on new business opportunities. In 1994, Francis returned to New Orleans to practice law with the law firm of Sher, Garner, Cahil, Richter, Klein, & Hilbert, LLC, where he specialized in litigation, business transactions, and government relations.

Francis was involved with a number of civic organizations and social causes. He worked closely with Stevie Wonder and the United Nations in an effort to pass a global treaty to help the visually impaired gain affordable access to braille and electronic information. Francis also played an integral role in Xavier University of Louisiana's decision to become the first historically black college in the country to open a Confucius Institute. He also served as a board member for Tulane University, The Norman C. Francis Leadership Institute, The Louise McGehee School, and The New Orleans Sugar Bowl. Francis is a member of The HistoryMakers' National Advisory board, Lionel Hampton's designee on the National Committee for the Lionel Hampton Center, and a member of the New Orleans tri-centennial committee as well.

Recognized within the New Orleans community for his contributions to the city, Francis, in 2015, was named in the Young Leadership Council's list of the "25 Role Models of 2015." He was also named as one of the Family Service of Greater New Orleans' "10 Outstanding Persons," as well one of the city's top 50 leaders in the legal industry as compiled by *New Orleans City Business* magazine.

Timothy Francis was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on May 23, 2017.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Timothy Francis was conducted by Denise Gines on May 23, 2017, in New Orleans, Louisiana, and was recorded on 5 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Lawyer Timothy Francis (1958 -), lawyer

with the New Orleans law firm of Sher, Garner, Cahill, Richter, Klein & Hilbert L.L.C., legislative assistant and counsel to a U.S. Senator and chief operating officer of Stevie Wonder Enterprises.

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:

Francis, Timothy B.

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Francis, Timothy B.--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Lawyer

HistoryMakers® Category:

LawMakers

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 Timothy Francis, May 23, 2017. 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 Timothy Francis, Section
A2017_104_001_001, TRT: 1:30:02 2017/05/23

Timothy Francis was born on April 17, 1958 in New Orleans, Louisiana to Blanche Macdonald Francis and Norman Francis. His maternal great-grandfather came from Scotland, and met his wife in the Dominican Republic. They settled in Cuba, where Francis' maternal grandfather, Guillermo Macdonald, was born. At the invitation of Booker T. Washington, Francis' grandfather moved to Alabama to attend the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, where he met Elizabeth Collins Macdonald. They married and moved to New Orleans, where Francis' mother, Blanche Macdonald Francis, was born and raised. She attended Xavier University of Louisiana and Indiana University, and served as a professor and community activist in New Orleans. Francis' father, Norman Francis, was born around 1930 in Lafayette, Louisiana to Mabel Coco Francis and barber Joseph Abel Francis. He met Francis' mother at Xavier University of Louisiana, and earned a law degree from the Loyola University New Orleans College of Law.

Video Oral History Interview with Timothy Francis, Section

A2017_104_001_002, TRT: 2:28:34 2017/05/23

Timothy Francis' parents, Blanche Macdonald Francis and Norman Francis, both worked at Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans, Louisiana. On the campus, Francis befriended Marc H. Morial, who was the son of his parents' friends. In New Orleans, Francis attended the St. Rita Catholic School and St. John Vianney Preparatory School. He enjoyed art, football and baseball. Upon graduating, Francis enrolled at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, where he played for the baseball team. He transferred to the Xavier University of Louisiana, and received a bachelor's degree in political science in 1980. That year, he moved to Washington, D.C. to work for U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Moon Landrieu. He returned to New Orleans in 1982, and worked briefly for district attorney Harry Connick, Sr., before enrolling at the Tulane University Law School. He went on to join the law firm of McGlinchey, Stafford, Mintz, Cellini and Lang, and later served as counsel to U.S. Senator John Breaux.

Video Oral History Interview with Timothy Francis, Section
A2017_104_001_003, TRT: 3:30:01 2017/05/23

Timothy Francis met musical artist Stevie Wonder in 1984. He initially worked as Wonder's political adviser, and became the COO and president of The Wonder Foundation in 1989. In this capacity, Francis met with Desmond Tutu to coordinate Wonder's involvement in the anti-apartheid movement. In 1991, Francis left the foundation to become a screenwriter. He also printed artwork for Sam Gilliam, Elizabeth Catlett and Frederick J. Brown. Francis later returned to New Orleans, where he married Ashley McIntyre Francis and formed the law firm of Sher Garner Cahill Richter Klein McAlister and Hubert, LLC. He served as an adviser to Mayor Marc H. Morial, and developed hotels like the Hotel Le Cirque. In 1995, he served as a co-executive producer of Lionel Hampton's 'For the Love of Music.' Francis talks about his daughters, Olivia Francis and Sarah Francis; and remembers sheltering his family in Jackson, Mississippi during the landfall of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Video Oral History Interview with Timothy Francis, Section

A2017_104_001_004, TRT: 4:26:07 2017/05/23

Timothy Francis worked for the law firm of Sher Garner Cahill Richter Klein and Hilbert, LLC in New Orleans, Louisiana. After Hurricane Katrina, he helped secure damages from private insurance companies and the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on behalf of Xavier University of Louisiana, Dillard University and the Children's Hospital of New Orleans. Francis also defended the City of New Orleans' decision to remove four Confederate monuments, and helped hold oil and gas companies accountable for damage to the Louisiana coastline. He served on the boards of the Contemporary Arts Center of New Orleans, the New Orleans Museum of Art, the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, the New Orleans Sugar Bowl, the Lionel Hampton Foundation and the Norman C. Francis Leadership Institute. At this point in the interview, Francis reflects upon the long term impact of Hurricane Katrina, the changes in the City of New Orleans and the presidency of Barack Obama.

Video Oral History Interview with Timothy Francis, Section
A2017_104_001_005, TRT: 5:10:38 2017/05/23

Timothy Francis was a friend of the artist Frederick J. Brown. After Brown's death, Francis worked with his estate to publish many of his works posthumously. In 2012, Francis acted in Neema Barnette's film 'Woman Thou Art Loosed: On The 7th Day,' with Blair Underwood. That year, he also coauthored the book 'So You Want To Be a Lawyer: The Ultimate Guide to Getting Into and Succeeding in Law School' with fellow attorneys Walter C. Jones and Lisa Jones Johnson. At the time of the interview, Francis was in the process of creating a television series about the influence of lobbyists on Capitol Hill for Lionsgate Television and FremantleMedia Ltd. At this point in the interview, Francis reflects upon his life and legacy. He also shares a message to future generations, and concludes the interview by expressing his gratitude to his parents, Blanche Macdonald Francis and Norman Francis.