

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Lenny Wilkens

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Wilkens, Lenny, 1937-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Lenny Wilkens,
Dates:	October 5, 2017
Bulk Dates:	2017
Physical Description:	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:43:36).
Abstract:	Basketball coach and player (1937 -) played in the National Basketball Association (NBA) for fifteen years and transitioned to coaching where he won an NBA Championship and was inducted into the NBA Hall of Fame as a coach Wilkens was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 5, 2017, in Seattle, Washington. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2017_177
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Basketball coach and player Lenny Wilkens was born on October 28, 1937 in Brooklyn, New York. He graduated from Boys High School in Brooklyn and received his B.A. degree from Providence College in 1960, where he was a two-time All-American on the men's basketball team.

Wilkens was chosen by the St. Louis Hawks in the 1960 National Basketball Association (NBA) draft. He spent eight years with the Hawks organization and between 1960 and 1970, he was voted to nine all-star teams and finished second to Wilt Chamberlain for the NBA's MVP Award in 1968. That same year, Wilkens was traded to the Seattle SuperSonics becoming a player-coach. He led the Sonics to their first winning season in 1971 and 1972. He ranked among the all-time leaders in assists, free throws, and was named MVP in the 1971 All-Star game. Wilkens left coaching to play with the Cleveland Cavaliers in 1972, and later became player-coach of the Portland Trail Blazers. In 1975, he retired from playing after fifteen seasons and remained as coach of the TrailBlazers for an additional season.

Wilkens returned to Seattle as head coach midway through the 1977 and 1978 season. He coached the Sonics to the NBA Finals that year. In his eight seasons with the Sonics, the team won its only NBA Championship in 1979, and compiled a record of 357-277 for a winning percentage 56.3. He served as the Sonic general manager for one season before accepting the head coach position for the Cleveland Cavaliers, where he coached for seven seasons. He later joined the Atlanta Hawks, coaching the team to the Central Division Championship and was named NBA Coach of the Year in 1994. Wilkens remained with the Atlanta Hawks organization until 2000, and left to coach the Toronto Raptors from 2000 to 2003, and the New York Knicks from 2004 to 2005. The following year, Wilkens was hired as vice chairman of the Seattle SuperSonics ownership group, and later became president of basketball operations. Wilkens retired from the organization in 2007.

Wilkens was the only person named one of the fifty greatest players and one of the top ten coaches in league

history, and was inducted into the Naismith Hall of Fame as a player and a coach.

Wilkens and his wife, Marilyn have three children, Leesha, Randy and Jamee.

Lenny Wilkens was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on October 5, 2017.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Lenny Wilkens was conducted by Larry Crowe on October 5, 2017, in Seattle, Washington, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Basketball coach and player (1937 -) played in the National Basketball Association (NBA) for fifteen years and transitioned to coaching where he won an NBA Championship and was inducted into the NBA Hall of Fame as a coach

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:

Wilkens, Lenny, 1937-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Wilkens, Lenny, 1937- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Basketball Coach

Basketball Player

HistoryMakers® Category:

SportsMakers

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 Lenny Wilkens, October 5, 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 5/30/2023 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 Lenny Wilkens, Section A2017_177_001_001, TRT: 1:30:01 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Lenny Wilkens, Section A2017_177_001_002, TRT: 2:30:07 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Lenny Wilkens, Section A2017_177_001_003, TRT: 3:29:08 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Lenny Wilkens, Section A2017_177_001_004, TRT: 4:31:52 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Lenny Wilkens, Section A2017_177_001_005, TRT: 5:28:51 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Lenny Wilkens, Section A2017_177_001_006, TRT: 6:30:55 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Lenny Wilkens, Section A2017_177_001_007, TRT: 7:31:21 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Lenny Wilkens, Section A2017_177_001_008, TRT: 8:11:21 ?