

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Clarence Otis, Jr.

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Otis, Clarence
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Otis, Jr.,
<b>Dates:</b>	August 17, 2018
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2018
<b>Physical Description:</b>	11 uncompressed MOV digital video files (5:18:42).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Corporate executive Clarence Otis, Jr. (1956- ) served as president of Smokey Bones BBQ, and subsequently as CEO of Darden Restaurants from 2004 until 2014. Otis was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 17, 2018, in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2018_147
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Corporate executive Clarence Otis, Jr. was born on April 11, 1956 in Vicksburg, Mississippi to homemaker Calanthus Hall Otis and janitor Clarence Otis, Sr. Relocating to Los Angeles, California at four years old, he attended San Pedro Street Elementary School and, following a move to the city's Watts neighborhood at age seven, Grape Street Elementary School. From there, he attended Edwin Marham Junior High School and David Starr Jordan High School, where he was the valedictorian of his graduating class in 1973. Otis was then awarded a scholarship to attend Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts, where he graduated in 1977 with dual degrees in political science and economics. Otis then enrolled at Stanford University Law School, earning his J.D. degree in 1980.

Otis worked as a corporate law associate for two New York City-based firms, Donovan, Leisure, Newton & Irvine and Gordon, Hurwitz, & Butowsky. In 1984, he entered the finance sector, joining the municipal securities group at Kidder, Peabody & Company. From 1987 to 1990, he served as the vice president of the public finance division at First Boston Corporation. Then, Otis became the founding partner of Siebert Municipal Securities, a division of Muriel Siebert & Company. In 1991, Otis was named the managing director of public finance and head of the unit at Chemical Securities. Four years later, he moved to Orlando, Florida to join Darden Restaurants as senior vice president and treasurer, operating restaurant chains including Red Lobster, Olive Garden, and Smokey Bones BBQ. Otis oversaw the financing activities of the company's 1,200 restaurant locations nationwide. He was promoted to chief financial officer in 1998, and then president of Smokey Bones BBQ in 2002. During his two year tenure there, he increased the number of restaurants from thirty to eighty. In 2004, Otis was named chief executive officer of Darden Restaurants, and became chairman of its board of directors in 2005. In this role, Otis acquired popular chains like LongHorn Steakhouse and Capital Grille, before retiring as CEO of Darden Restaurants in 2014, after ten years in the position.

Otis served on several boards including Williams College board of trustees, The Travelers Companies, Verizon

Communications and Boys & Girls Clubs of America board of governors.

Otis and his wife, Jacqueline Bradley Otis, reside in Florida, where they own one of the largest privately held African American art collections in the United States.

Clarence Otis, Jr. was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on August 17, 2018.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Clarence Otis, Jr. was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on August 17, 2018, in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 11 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Corporate executive Clarence Otis, Jr. (1956- ) served as president of Smokey Bones BBQ, and subsequently as CEO of Darden Restaurants from 2004 until 2014.

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## 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®.

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## 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.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

Otis, Clarence

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Otis, Clarence--Interviews

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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## Occupations:

Corporate Chief Executive

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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## 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 Clarence Otis, Jr., August 17, 2018. 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).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Otis, Jr., Section A2018\_147\_001\_001, TRT: 1:30:08 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Otis, Jr., Section A2018\_147\_001\_002, TRT: 2:33:17 ?  
Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Otis, Jr., Section A2018\_147\_001\_003, TRT: 3:29:16 ?  
Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Otis, Jr., Section A2018\_147\_001\_004, TRT: 4:33:13 ?  
Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Otis, Jr., Section A2018\_147\_001\_005, TRT: 5:32:59 ?  
Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Otis, Jr., Section A2018\_147\_001\_006, TRT: 6:32:14 ?  
Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Otis, Jr., Section A2018\_147\_001\_007, TRT: 7:29:32 ?  
Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Otis, Jr., Section A2018\_147\_001\_008, TRT: 8:29:22 ?  
Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Otis, Jr., Section A2018\_147\_001\_009, TRT: 9:29:10 ?  
Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Otis, Jr., Section A2018\_147\_001\_010, TRT: 10:30:03 ?  
Video Oral History Interview with Clarence Otis, Jr., Section A2018\_147\_001\_011, TRT: 11:09:28 ?