

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Benjamin F. Davis, Jr.

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Davis, Ben, 1945-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Benjamin F. Davis, Jr.,
Dates:	September 25, 2018
Bulk Dates:	2018
Physical Description:	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:18:42).
Abstract:	Football player and entrepreneur Ben Davis (1945-) played for the Cleveland Browns from 1967 to 1973 and the Detroit Lions from 1975 to 1976, before owning and operating Britt Business Systems, a retailer for the Xerox Corporation. Davis was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 25, 2018, in Cleveland, Ohio. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2018_191
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Football player and entrepreneur Ben Davis was born on October 30, 1945 in Birmingham, Alabama to B. Frank and Sallye B. Davis. His sister is activist, author, and professor Angela Davis. He graduated at age fifteen from Fair Lawn High School in Fair Lawn, New Jersey in 1961, and attended Bridgton Academy in North Bridgton, Maine from 1961 to 1963. He received his B.A. degree in business education from Defiance College in Defiance, Ohio and was a running back and wide receiver for the Yellow Jackets football team. He led the team to an undefeated season (9-0) during his senior year and received honors as a Little All-American.

Davis was the 439th overall draft pick in the 1967 NFL Draft, selected by the Cleveland Browns as a defensive back in the seventeenth round. In his rookie season with the Browns, Davis led the league in punt returns, averaging 12.7 yards per return, including one fifty-two yard return for a touchdown. Davis also led the Browns in kickoff returns, with twenty-seven returns totaling 708 yards, including one sixty-three yard return in 1967. In 1968, he started as a cornerback, and led the team with eight interceptions. In 1968, he also led the NFL in interception return yards with 162, the third best in Browns' history and he holds the record for seven consecutive games with an interception. That same year, he was named All Pro Defense Back by *Sporting News*. A torn anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) benched Davis for one and a half seasons from 1969 to 1970, but he started for the Browns for three more seasons from 1971 to 1973. He was traded to the Detroit Lions for a fifth-round draft pick in 1974, and played three more seasons for the Lions before retiring in 1977.

After retiring from a ten year NFL career, Davis joined the Xerox Corporation as a sales representative. In 1982, Davis co-founded and served as president of Telecable Broadcasting of America (TBA), a cable TV provider in the greater Cleveland area. TBA was one of the first African American owned and operated cable TV companies in the U.S. Davis started another cable TV company in Jefferson Township, a suburb of Dayton, Ohio, in 1986, which he later sold to the Centel Corporation. In 1989, Davis started a radio station in Tulsa, Oklahoma (94.1 FM) that he ran for five years, eventually selling the station to Shamrock Communications. In 1990, Davis created Britt

Business Systems in Cleveland, Ohio which sold and serviced Xerox office equipment in Cleveland and surrounding suburbs. Davis operated Britt for seventeen years until his retirement in 2007. Davis and his wife Sylvia have two adult children, Cecilie and Benjamin, III, and three grandchildren.

Ben Davis was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on September 26, 2018.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Benjamin F. Davis, Jr. was conducted by Larry Crowe on September 25, 2018, in Cleveland, Ohio, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Football player and entrepreneur Ben Davis (1945-) played for the Cleveland Browns from 1967 to 1973 and the Detroit Lions from 1975 to 1976, before owning and operating Britt Business Systems, a retailer for the Xerox Corporation.

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:

Davis, Ben, 1945-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Davis, Ben, 1945- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Football Player

Entrepreneur

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers|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 Benjamin F. Davis, Jr., September 25, 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).

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 Benjamin F. Davis, Jr., Section A2018_191_001_001, TRT: 1:28:26 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Benjamin F. Davis, Jr., Section A2018_191_001_002, TRT: 2:28:06 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Benjamin F. Davis, Jr., Section A2018_191_001_003, TRT: 3:27:54 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Benjamin F. Davis, Jr., Section A2018_191_001_004, TRT: 4:28:46 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Benjamin F. Davis, Jr., Section A2018_191_001_005, TRT: 5:29:16 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Benjamin F. Davis, Jr., Section A2018_191_001_006, TRT: 6:31:35 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Benjamin F. Davis, Jr., Section A2018_191_001_007, TRT: 7:19:57 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Benjamin F. Davis, Jr., Section A2018_191_001_008, TRT: 8:04:42 ?