

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Robert Stepto

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Stepto, Robert B.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Robert Stepto,
Dates:	August 24, 2019 and October 25, 2019
Bulk Dates:	2019
Physical Description:	14 uncompressed MOV digital video files (5:59:53).
Abstract:	Professor Robert Stepto (1945-) served as an English and African American studies professor at Yale University since 1974. Stepto was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 24, 2019 and October 25, 2019, in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts and New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2019_095
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Professor Robert Stepto was born October 28, 1945 in Chicago, Illinois to Dr. Robert and Anna Stepto. He attended the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools, graduating in 1962. He then attended Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, where he earned his B.A. degree in English in 1966. Stepto went on to attend Stanford University, where he received his M.A. degree in English literature in 1968, and his Ph.D. degree in English and American literature in 1974.

From 1971 to 1974, Stepto was an assistant professor of English and American civilization at Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts. He was hired by Yale University in 1974 as an assistant professor of English, American studies, and African American studies. Stepto served as the first director of graduate studies in the African American studies department from 1978 until 1981. In 1984, he became a tenured professor in the English, American studies, and African American studies departments. His focus areas were American and African American autobiography, fiction, poetry and visual arts since 1840. Stepto also began teaching summer classes at Bread Loaf School of English at Middlebury College in Ripton, Vermont in 1990. He released his first book, *From Behind the Veil: A Study of Afro-American Narrative* in 1979. In 1998, he published his memoir, *Blue as the Lake: A Personal Geography*. From 2005 to 2008, Stepto chaired the African American studies department at Yale University. He later published a series of essays in 2010 that analyze works ranging from Frederick Douglass to W. E. B. Du Bois and Toni Morrison, which he titled *A Home Elsewhere: Reading African American Classics in the Age of Obama*. Stepto retired from Yale University after forty-five years.

Over the years, Stepto received numerous awards for his writings, which included: Notable American Essay of 2001 and Pushcart Prize nomination for "Greyhound Kind of Mood," published by the *New England Review*; Notable American Essay of 1997 for "Hyde Park," published by *Callaloo*; Notable American Essay of 1996 for "Black Piano," published by *Callaloo*; and Notable American Essay of 1995 for "Woodlawn," published by the *New England Review*. Other awards included the Bread Loaf School of English's Frank and Eleanor Griffiths

Chair Professor of English in 2007 and 2017, as well as its Robert Frost Chair Professor of English in 1995. In 2018, Yale University named Stepto its John M. Schiff Professor of English. Trinity College also presented Stepto with its 175th Anniversary Alumni Award in 1999, and the Alumni Medal for Excellence in 1986.

Stepto resides in Connecticut with his wife, Michele L. Stepto. They had two children: Rafael Stepto and the late Gabriel Stepto.

Robert Stepto was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on August 24, 2019.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Robert Stepto was conducted by Harriette Cole on August 24, 2019 and October 25, 2019, in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts and New York, New York, and was recorded on 14 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Professor Robert Stepto (1945-) served as an English and African American studies professor at Yale University since 1974.

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:

Stepto, Robert B.

Cole, Harriette (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Stepto, Robert B.--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Professor

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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 Robert Stepto, August 24, 2019 and October 25, 2019. 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 Robert Stepto, Section A2019_095_001_001, TRT: 1:32:37 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Robert Stepto, Section A2019_095_001_002, TRT: 2:28:45 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Robert Stepto, Section A2019_095_001_003, TRT: 3:28:18 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Robert Stepto, Section A2019_095_001_004, TRT: 4:30:20 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Robert Stepto, Section A2019_095_001_005, TRT: 5:28:04 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Robert Stepto, Section A2019_095_001_006, TRT: 6:27:54 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Robert Stepto, Section A2019_095_001_007, TRT: 7:08:05 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Robert Stepto, Section A2019_095_002_008, TRT: 8:29:16 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Robert Stepto, Section A2019_095_002_009, TRT: 9:32:42 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Robert Stepto, Section A2019_095_002_010, TRT: 10:29:33 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Robert Stepto, Section A2019_095_002_011, TRT: 11:30:35 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Robert Stepto, Section A2019_095_002_012, TRT: 12:29:20 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Robert Stepto, Section A2019_095_002_013, TRT: 13:14:43 ?
Video Oral History Interview with Robert Stepto, Section A2019_095_002_014, TRT: 14:09:41 ?