Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers ® Video Oral History with John W. Thompson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Thompson, John W., 1949-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with John W. Thompson,
Dates:	December 18, 2019
Bulk Dates:	2019
Physical Description:	9 uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:31:28).
Abstract:	Chief executive officer John W. Thompson (1949-) worked for IBM for twenty-eight years before joining Symantec in 1999 as the only African American head of a technology company at the time, and was later appointed chairman of Microsoft in 2014. Thompson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 18, 2019, in Menlo Park, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2019_144
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Chief executive officer John W. Thompson was born on April 24, 1949 to Eunice Walden and John H. Thompson in Fort Dix, New Jersey. He was raised in West Palm Beach, Florida where he graduated from John F. Kennedy High School in 1967. He briefly attended Lincoln University on a music scholarship before transferring to Florida A&M University where he earned his B.A. degree in business administration in 1971. Thompson later attended the Sloan School of Management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he received his M.A. degree in management science in 1983.

After obtaining his B.A. degree from Florida A&M University, Thompson joined IBM Corporation as a salesman. He was later promoted to general manager for development and marketing of OS/2 computer software and other Intel-based server products. During his career at IBM, Thompson held the roles of branch manager, assistant to the regional manager, regional marketing director, assistant to the chief executive officer and chairman, director of IBM's Midwest operations, and general manager of personal software products. He was also a member of the company's worldwide management council. Thompson left IBM as general manager of IBM Americas in 1999. That same year, he was appointed chief executive officer and chairman of Symantec Corporation in California, making him the only African American at that time to lead a technology company. He retired from Symantec in April of 2009, but remained as chairman of the board until October of 2011. In 2010, Thompson became chief executive officer of Virtual Instruments. He remained here until April of 2016; and, the following year, he joined Riverwood Capital Management as an executive advisor. Thompson was with Riverwood until March of 2018. In May of 2018, he became a venture partner with Lightspeed Venture Partners.

Thompson has served on numerous boards, including those of Illumina, the Illinois Governor's Human Resource Advisory Council, Teach for America, Illumio, Liquid Robotics, Rubrik, and Seismic Software. In 2014, he became chairman of Microsoft, where he succeeded Microsoft founder Bill Gates. He was also appointed to the

National Infrastructure Advisory Committee in 2002 and to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi's Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission in 2009.

Thompson has been the recipient of numerous awards throughout his career, including the Pioneer Business Leader Award presented at the Silicon Valley Education Foundation's 2010 Pioneers & Purpose event, and the Technology and Business Award presented by Black Entertainment Television in 2015.

Thompson resides with his wife, Sandi, in California. He has two adult children, Chelsea and John E. Thompson.

John W. Thompson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on December 18, 2019.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with John W. Thompson was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on December 18, 2019, in Menlo Park, California, and was recorded on 9 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Chief executive officer John W. Thompson (1949-) worked for IBM for twenty-eight years before joining Symantec in 1999 as the only African American head of a technology company at the time, and was later appointed chairman of Microsoft in 2014.

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:

Thompson, John W., 1949-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Thompson, John W., 1949---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Chief Executive Officer

HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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 John W. Thompson, December 18, 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 John W. Thompson, Section A2019_144_001_001, TRT: 1:30:32 ?

Video Oral History Interview with John W. Thompson, Section A2019_144_001_002, TRT: 2:29:03 ?

Video Oral History Interview with John W. Thompson, Section A2019_144_001_003, TRT: 3:30:59 ?

Video Oral History Interview with John W. Thompson, Section A2019_144_001_004, TRT: 4:30:00 ?

Video Oral History Interview with John W. Thompson, Section A2019_144_001_005, TRT: 5:26:06 ?

Video Oral History Interview with John W. Thompson, Section A2019_144_001_006, TRT: 6:30:33 ?

Video Oral History Interview with John W. Thompson, Section A2019_144_001_007, TRT: 7:30:19 ?

Video Oral History Interview with John W. Thompson, Section A2019_144_001_008, TRT: 8:30:50 ?

Video Oral History Interview with John W. Thompson, Section A2019_144_001_009, TRT: 9:33:06 ?