

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Willis C. Patterson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Patterson, Willis C.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Willis C. Patterson,
Dates:	March 18, 2022 and November 2, 2022
Bulk Dates:	2022
Physical Description:	17 uncompressed MOV digital video files (8:16:13).
Abstract:	Professor and opera singer Willis Patterson (1930 -) was the first African American professor and associate dean of the University of Michigan's School of Music, Theater, and Dance. Patterson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 18, 2022 and November 2, 2022, in Ann Arbor, Michigan and Detroit, Michigan. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2022_029
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Professor and opera singer Willis Patterson was born on November 27, 1930, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He received his B.M. degree in 1958 and M.M. degree in 1959 from the University of Michigan, in Ann Arbor. From 1965 to 1966, he studied German Lieder at the Staalische Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg, West Germany, on a Fulbright Fellowship. He received his Ph.D. degree in education administration and supervision in 1993 from Wayne State University, in Detroit, Michigan. He also attended Eastern Michigan University and the Manhattan School of Music.

Patterson joined the Air Force in 1949. He began teaching at Southern University and A&M College, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1959. In 1962, he accepted a professorship at Virginia State University, in Petersburg, Virginia. In 1963, he performed in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. In 1968, Patterson became the first African American professor in the School of Music, Theater, and Dance at the University of Michigan. In 1969, he founded the Willis C. Patterson Our Own Thing Chorale and became the director of the University of Michigan Men's Glee Club, a position he held until 1975. That year, Patterson was appointed chair of the Department of Voice. He published an anthology of African American music, *Anthology of Art Songs by Black American Composers*, in 1977. In 1979, Patterson was appointed associate dean of the School of Music, Theater, and Dance. In 1985, he began serving as music director of The First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor. Patterson retired from the University of Michigan in 1999. Patterson has performed in numerous operas, including *Porgy and Bess*, *Fidelio*, and *La Bohème*.

Patterson became executive secretary of the National Black Music Caucus in 1977 and served as president of the National Association of Negro Musicians from 1990 to 1995. He is a co-founder of the Ann Arbor Community Fund.

Patterson is a recipient of the Marian Anderson Award.

Patterson and his wife, Francis Patterson, live in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He has four children.

Willis Patterson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 18, 2022.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Willis C. Patterson was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 18, 2022 and November 2, 2022, in Ann Arbor, Michigan and Detroit, Michigan, and was recorded on 17 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Professor and opera singer Willis Patterson (1930 -) was the first African American professor and associate dean of the University of Michigan's School of Music, Theater, and Dance.

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:

Patterson, Willis C.

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Patterson, Willis C.--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

University of Michigan

Occupations:

Music Professor

HistoryMakers® Category:

MusicMakers

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 Willis C. Patterson, March 18, 2022 and November 2, 2022. 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 Willis C. Patterson, Section A2022_029_001_001, TRT: 1:28:42
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- Video Oral History Interview with Willis C. Patterson, Section A2022_029_001_002, TRT: 2:34:59 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Willis C. Patterson, Section A2022_029_001_003, TRT: 3:29:09 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Willis C. Patterson, Section A2022_029_001_004, TRT: 4:29:48 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Willis C. Patterson, Section A2022_029_001_005, TRT: 5:29:18 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Willis C. Patterson, Section A2022_029_001_006, TRT: 6:28:53 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Willis C. Patterson, Section A2022_029_001_007, TRT: 7:33:46 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Willis C. Patterson, Section A2022_029_001_008, TRT: 8:29:43 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Willis C. Patterson, Section A2022_029_002_009, TRT: 9:30:21 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Willis C. Patterson, Section A2022_029_002_010, TRT: 10:31:25 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Willis C. Patterson, Section A2022_029_002_011, TRT: 11:28:26 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Willis C. Patterson, Section A2022_029_002_012, TRT: 12:26:24 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Willis C. Patterson, Section A2022_029_002_013, TRT: 13:30:03 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Willis C. Patterson, Section A2022_029_002_014, TRT: 14:32:05 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Willis C. Patterson, Section A2022_029_002_015, TRT: 15:30:29 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Willis C. Patterson, Section A2022_029_002_016, TRT: 16:31:15 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Willis C. Patterson, Section A2022_029_002_017, TRT: 17:11:27 ?