

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Joel I. Ferguson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Ferguson, Joel (Joel I.)
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Joel I. Ferguson,
Dates:	March 19, 2022
Bulk Dates:	2022
Physical Description:	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:42:28).
Abstract:	Businessman and developer Joel Ferguson (1938 -) co-founded F & S Development Company, later Ferguson Development LLC, in Lansing, Michigan, in 1973 and was the longest-serving trustee of Michigan State University, from 1986 to 2021, including twelve years as chair. Ferguson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 19, 2022, in Lansing, Michigan. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2022_030
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Businessman and developer Joel Ferguson was born on November 14, 1938, in Lansing, Michigan, to Josephine and Rollin Ferguson. He received his bachelor's degree in elementary education in 1965 from Michigan State University, in East Lansing, Michigan.

Ferguson served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1957 to 1959. After college, he taught elementary school and adult education and was assistant director of the job training center for the Michigan Catholic Conference for two years. He served as the director of the Greater Lansing Urban League On the Job Training program from 1967 to 1969. In 1967, he also became the first African American elected to the Lansing City Council, where he served three terms, until 1970. In 1968, he chaired Robert F. Kennedy's presidential campaign in mid-Michigan and the Michigan Delegation to the Democratic National Convention. From 1969 to 1973, Ferguson was development director at the Mid-West Urban Construction Company of Flint, Michigan. In 1972, he worked on George McGovern's presidential campaign and has had a role in every Democratic presidential campaign since. In 1973, Ferguson co-founded F & S Development Company, which became Ferguson Development LLC in 1996, in Lansing. In 1980, Ferguson became co-owner of the property management firm First Housing Corporation and, in 1982, founded WFSL-TV in Lansing, later WSYM Fox47, where he served as president. He co-founded Lansing's Capitol National Bank in 1983. He served as Michigan campaign manager for Reverend Jesse Jackson's 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns. Ferguson founded Lansing's WLAJ-TV, an ABC affiliate, in 1990, where he served as president. Ferguson has developed buildings across Michigan, including for the Michigan State Police and the Michigan House of Representatives.

In 1986, Ferguson was elected to the Michigan State University board of trustees, where he served twelve years as chair and was the longest-serving member, ending his tenure in 2021. In 1988, Ferguson became an at-large member of the Democratic National Committee, where he later served on the Standing Committee on Credentials.

He joined the board of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation in 1989, of which he became vice-chair in 2004, and served on the board of the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation (Freddie Mac) from 1995 to 2001. From 2001 to 2003, he was vice-chair of the Democratic National Committee Black Caucus. He also has served on the boards of the Michigan Broadband Development Authority and the Flint Receivership Transition Authority, as a senior advisor for Detroit Mayor Coleman Young's reelection campaign, on the Ingham County Board of Supervisors, the Greater Lansing Safety Council, and the Citizens Commission to Improve Michigan Courts.

Ferguson received the A. Philip Randolph Institute Award in 1987, an NAACP Truth & Justice Award, a Lansing Black Lawyer's Association award in 2005, a doctorate of humane letter from Adrian College in 2008, an award from the Greater Lansing Sports Hall of Fame in 2013, and the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Commission Award. In 2022, Ferguson was awarded the Xavier DeGroat Autism Foundation award.

Ferguson and his significant other, Anna Strong, live in Lansing. He has five children, Dori, Barry, Jennifer, David, and Stacie.

Joel Ferguson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 19, 2022.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Joel I. Ferguson was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 19, 2022, in Lansing, Michigan, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Businessman and developer Joel Ferguson (1938 -) co-founded F & S Development Company, later Ferguson Development LLC, in Lansing, Michigan, in 1973 and was the longest-serving trustee of Michigan State University, from 1986 to 2021, including twelve years as chair.

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:

Ferguson, Joel (Joel I.)

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Ferguson, Joel (Joel I.)--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Entrepreneur

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 Joel I. Ferguson, March 19, 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 Joel I. Ferguson, Section A2022_030_001_001, TRT: 1:30:19 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Joel I. Ferguson, Section A2022_030_001_002, TRT: 2:29:13 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Joel I. Ferguson, Section A2022_030_001_003, TRT: 3:32:26 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Joel I. Ferguson, Section A2022_030_001_004, TRT: 4:32:33 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Joel I. Ferguson, Section A2022_030_001_005, TRT: 5:30:00 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Joel I. Ferguson, Section A2022_030_001_006, TRT: 6:07:57 ?