Emory Libraries debuts HistoryMakers Digital Archive database
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The HistoryMakers Digital Archive is one of Emory Libraries’ newest licensed databases, offering access to hundreds of full-length oral-history video interviews with African Americans in a variety of fields including business, medicine, the arts, education, entertainment, religion, civic leadership and activism, politics, media, music, the military, sports and more. The licensed database is open to current Emory students, faculty and staff.

“This is a huge asset for faculty and students, and it really meshes well with the collections in the Rose Library,” says Gabrielle Dudley, instruction archivist and QEP librarian with Emory’s Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library. “The topics complement our African American holdings around the history of the South and modern politics.”

There are nearly 1,200 interviewees listed in the index, with multiple interview clips for each person. The database includes such HistoryMakers as civil rights activists C.T. Vivian, Joseph and Evelyn Lowery, and U.S. Congressman John Lewis; late Emory professor Richard A. Long; Atlanta Journal Constitution reporter Ernie Suggs; and Ebony magazine editor Lerone Bennett and artist Amalia Amaki, both Rose Library supporters.

“This will be a fabulous resource for my students,” says Carol Anderson, Samuel Candler Dobbs Professor and chair of Emory’s African American Studies department, who says she came across political leaders such as John Conyers, a founding member of the
African American historian, author and Morehouse College alumnus Lerone Bennett, Ebony magazine editor and Rose Library supporter. Video still courtesy The HistoryMakers.

Understanding what they had to deal with and the decisions that had to be made, the compromises they had to make – getting that firsthand is the raw material of great analytical narrative. For students in my Civil Rights Movement class, that’s amazing.”

About the database

The digital archive is an enhanced product from The HistoryMakers, an organization that records and preserves the nation’s largest African American oral history video collection and shares on its website. With the database subscription, Emory users have access to more interviewees and more interview clips, Dudley says. The interviews, averaging more than three hours, are broken up into short story clips and tagged with the subject’s name and the general topic or theme, such as discrimination/experience with racism, leadership, turning points, overcoming odds, and others, making the database easier to use for both students and researchers.

The HistoryMakers Digital Archive can be accessed via the search box on the Emory Libraries homepage (http://web.library.emory.edu) or directly at https://emory.thehistorymakers.com/ with an active Emory University login.

Archival fellowship for African American collections

In related news, Emory is one of three universities, along with Yale and Harvard universities, to offer a visiting archival fellowship for African American collections. The position is in collaboration with The HistoryMakers’ initiative to provide training to African American archivists and archivists interested in working with African American collections.
“We are both pleased and honored to participate in this initiative to advance diversity in archives and the stewardship of African American collections,” says University Librarian Yolanda Cooper. “We are also very excited to work with our distinguished and committed partners in this effort. African American collections are one of our primary collecting areas. They are growing, popular, innovative, and a vital pillar in the collections of the Rose Library.”

Emory’s two-year visiting archivist for African American collections is slated to begin on Aug. 1, 2016. More details about the position can be found here.

For more information about this database or to schedule a demonstration for a class, contact Erica Bruchko, African American Studies and US history librarian, at berica@emory.edu.

Related Links:
The HistoryMakers Digital Archive video tutorials
African American collections at the Rose Library
Emory Libraries blog on using the HistoryMakers Digital Archive database

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