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Guide to the Wilhelm Delano Meriwether Interview, 2008

Wilhelm Delano Meriwether was the first African-American to graduate from the Duke University School of Medicine.

Descriptive Summary

Collection Title: Wilhelm Delano Meriwether Interview, 2008

Creator: Meriwether, Wilhelm Delano.

Extent: 1 record storage box, 3 items, .25 linear feet

Processed By:

Date Completed:

Encoded By:

Biographical and Historical Note

Dr. Wilhelm Delano Meriwether was born in 1943 in Nashville, Tennessee. In 1967, he became the first African-American to graduate from the Duke University School of Medicine. He became a hematologist, and began directing the government's swine flu immunization program for the Public Health Service in 1972. He was also a self-trained champion sprinter, winning the 1971 National AAU championship in the 100-yard dash in nine seconds. He served as a physician in the Bantustan of Gazankulu (now part of South Africa) from 1983 until 1989.

Collection Overview

Dr. Meriwether speaks about his educational background; coming to Duke University School of Medicine due to the influence of his father; other schools that were integrating their medical schools at the same time; integrating the wards at Duke; women medical students at Duke; the quality of education at Duke; the fairness of the exchange made when he became the first African-American graduate of the Duke University School of Medicine and brought federal monies to the institution; the social developments at Duke and in America; the integration of the wards occurring without his participation; the lack of fanfare at Duke for his being a student in the medical school; his focus primarily on the typical challenges associated with medical school; Dr. Brenda Armstrong's more activist stance as a student at Duke; his thankfulness that his father convinced him to go to Duke; his father's desire that Duke be forced to do what was morally right; society's movement toward social responsibility in the area of global warming; his experience at Duke affecting his later decision to go to South Africa; his work as a physician in South Africa; his ability to take the Duke experience in stride; his desire to be a good doctor as being more important to him than the integration of the medical school; his experiences with research; some of the people he was working with at Duke; following Dr. James Wyngaarden to the University of Pennsylvania for his internship; his knowledge of Dr. Charles Drew; a negative experience in a restaurant just after his admissions interview at Duke; his responses to that negative experience; his preference of the term "liberating an institution" as opposed to "integrating an institution"; and some early patient reactions to him as a physician.

Online Catalog Headings

African Americans in medicine.

Duke University.

Duke University. School of Medicine.

Guide to the Wilhelm Delano Meriwether Interview, 2008

History of Medicine -- North Carolina -- Personal Narratives.

Meriwether, Wilhelm Delano.

School integration -- North Carolina.

Oral histories.

Interviews.

Transcripts.

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[Detailed Description of the Collection](#)

Interview on 7 March 2008

Box 1

Interview CD [49 minutes total]

Transcript [19 pages]

Release Form