

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Wilma J. Webb

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Webb, Wilma, 1943-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Wilma J. Webb,
Dates:	June 20, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:09:42).
Abstract:	State representative The Honorable Wilma J. Webb (1943 -) is a former Colorado state legislator and was the First Lady of Denver for thirteen years. Webb was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 20, 2002, in Denver, Colorado. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_124
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Wilma Webb, the First Lady of Denver, Colorado, was born in that same city in 1943. Webb's mother, Faye, was a nurse's assistant and her father, Frank Gerdine, worked for the Federal Government.

When she married Wellington Webb in 1969, Webb was already active in school reform and was a co-founder of the Committee on Greater Opportunity. In 1973, Webb became a Democratic Committeewoman and served as the Democratic Party secretary; the editor of the Democratic State Newsletter; and the chair of the Democratic Committee on Housing.

Webb became a member of the Colorado Legislature in 1980; while in office, she became the first minority woman on the Colorado Joint Budget Committee. Webb sponsored forty-four bills, eleven of which passed, including the Comprehensive Anti-Drug Abuse Program; Elderly Frail People to Receive Care at Home as Opposed to Nursing Home Placement; and Improvement of Living Conditions for Troubled Youth. In one of her hardest battles, Webb fought for four years before the State of Colorado adopted the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday.

Webb worked hand in hand with her husband in a historic grassroots mayoral campaign in which the couple walked all over the city, resulting in Wellington Webb becoming the first African American mayor of Denver in 1991. Denver's First Lady worked tirelessly on anti-drug abuse programs and youth and family issues. Webb's efforts to promote the arts resulted in the creation of the Denver Art, Culture, and Film Foundation in 1994. In 1998, Webb became the first woman to serve in the U.S. Department of Labor as the primary official for Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming; her duties included the administration and enforcement of federal statutes governing workplace activities, including pension rights, health benefits, and job training.

Webb traveled widely in North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa and held a graduate degree from the Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government. Webb was honored with several hundred national and statewide commendations, including the National Education Association's Carter G. Woodson Award for Human

and Civil Rights; the Association for Retarded Citizen's Legislator of the Year Award; and the Colorado Banking Association's Political Award. Webb also held memberships in the Zion Baptist Church; Delta Sigma Theta sorority; and the Links. Webb and her husband also raised four children.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Wilma J. Webb was conducted by Larry Crowe on June 20, 2002, in Denver, Colorado, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. State representative The Honorable Wilma J. Webb (1943 -) is a former Colorado state legislator and was the First Lady of Denver for thirteen years.

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:

Webb, Wilma, 1943-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Webb, Wilma, 1943---Interviews

African American women civic leaders--Interviews.

African American government executives--Interviews.

African American women legislators--Colorado--Interviews.

African American women politicians--Interviews.

African American families.

Five Points (Denver, Colo.)

African Americans--Genealogy

Race relations--United States

African Americans--Social life and customs

Games--United States

Race discrimination--United States

African American churches

African American youth

King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968

Democratic Party (U.S.)

Denver (Colo.)

Webb, Wellington E.

Apartheid

Motherhood

Sex discrimination

Arts and society

African American mothers

African American state legislators--Colorado--Interviews

African Americans--Marriage

African Americans--Religion

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Colorado

Occupations:

State Representative

HistoryMakers® Category:

PoliticalMakers

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 The Honorable Wilma J. Webb, June 20, 2002. 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 The Honorable Wilma J. Webb, Section A2002_124_001_001, TRT: 0:31:25 ?

Denver, Colorado, First Lady Wilma Webb describes her parents' backgrounds, explaining their move from the South to Denver, where they started a family. Webb details her upbringing in the Five Points neighborhood of Denver, describing her schooling, the close-knit community, and her favorite childhood recreations. Webb also discusses instances of discrimination while growing up in Denver.

African American women civic leaders--Interviews.

African American government executives--Interviews.

African American women legislators--Colorado--Interviews.

African American women politicians--Interviews.

African American families.

Five Points (Denver, Colo.).

African Americans--Genealogy.

United States--Race relations.

African Americans--Social life and customs.

Games--United States.

Race discrimination--United States.

African American churches.

African American youth.

King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968.

Democratic Party (U.S.).

Denver (Colo.).

Webb, Wellington E.

Apartheid.

Motherhood.

Sex discrimination.

Arts and society.

African American mothers.

African American state legislators--Colorado--Interviews.

African Americans--Marriage.

African Americans--Religion.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Wilma J. Webb, Section A2002_124_001_002, TRT: 0:31:03 ?

Denver, Colorado, First Lady Wilma Webb discusses her childhood, detailing her family life; her family's involvement in church; and the social life in her neighborhood of Five Points in Denver. Webb also continues to discuss the effect of segregation in Five Points, and explains the impact Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had on her way of thinking.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Wilma J. Webb, Section A2002_124_001_003, TRT: 0:29:10 ?

Denver, Colorado, First Lady Wilma Webb explains how race discrimination in

employment and education galvanized her into political action, citing Dr. Rachel Noel as a major political inspiration. Webb then details her involvement in the Democratic Party, describing her election as a committeeperson and state party secretary. Webb also discusses meeting her husband, Denver Mayor Wellington Webb, and their political careers.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Wilma J. Webb, Section A2002_124_001_004, TRT: 0:30:22 ?

Denver, Colorado, First Lady Wilma Webb details her time in the Colorado House of Representatives, beginning with the challenges she faced upon her election in 1980. Webb describes the highlights of her legislative career, including her four-year struggle to adopt a bill recognizing the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday. Webb also highlights her efforts to support drug abusers and to disinvest in South African companies during apartheid.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Wilma J. Webb, Section A2002_124_001_005, TRT: 0:27:42 ?

Denver, Colorado, First Lady Wilma Webb discusses her tenure as Denver's First Lady and reflects on her career as a public servant. Webb describes the highlights of her career as a First Lady, and explains why she and her husband placed particular emphasis on the arts. In her reflections on her career, Webb considers motherhood, racism, and sexism, and her hopes and concerns for the black community.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Wilma J. Webb, Section A2002_124_001_006, TRT: 0:31:19 ?

Denver, Colorado, First Lady Wilma Webb describes a series of photos depicting her life, family, and career.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Wilma J. Webb, Section A2002_124_001_007, TRT: 0:08:41 ?

Denver, Colorado, First Lady Wilma Webb describes photos depicting her life, family, and career.