

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Denise Page Hood

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Hood, Denise Page, 1952-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Denise Page Hood,
Dates:	August 22, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:00:00).
Abstract:	Federal district court judge The Honorable Denise Page Hood (1952 -) has served on the bench of Detroit's 36th District Court, the Recorder's Court and Wayne County Circuit Court. Hood was later appointed to the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, where she presides over both criminal and civil cases. Hood was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 22, 2002, in Detroit, Michigan. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_153
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

United States District Court Judge Denise Page Hood was born in Columbus, Ohio on February 21, 1952. After attending high school at the Columbus School for Girls, Hood earned her bachelor's degree from Yale University in 1974. She went on to graduate from the Columbia University School of Law in 1977.

In 1982, after working as an assistant corporation counsel for the City of Detroit Law Department for five years, Hood began her career behind the bench. As a judge, she served Detroit's 36th District Court, Recorder's Court and Wayne County Circuit Court. Her reputation in the legal community garnered her a nomination to the United States District Court from President Bill Clinton. On June 16, 1994, Hood was officially appointed to the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, becoming the first African American judge to join the Eastern District of Michigan bench in thirteen years. In this role, she has presided over both criminal and civil cases, including the Dow Corning bankruptcy/breast implant case involving the \$3.1 billion Settlement Facility-Dow Corning Trust. She is also chair of the Pro Bono Committee of the U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Michigan.

Over the course of her career, Hood has participated in numerous professional organizations. She has served as chair of the Michigan State Planning Body for legal services, the State Bar Pro Bono Initiatives Committee, and the Detroit Metropolitan Bar Association Foundation Board. She became the first African American female president of the Detroit Bar Association in 1993 and has also acted as the president of the Association of Black Judges of Michigan. In addition, she has contributed to numerous community organizations, and has served as a board member for the Lula Belle Stewart Center, the Cyprian Center and the Interim House; as vice chair of the Olivet College Board of Trustees and the Harper-Hutzel Hospital Board of Trustees; and chair of the InsideOut Literary Arts Project Board.

Hood's honors include the Damon J. Keith Community Spirit Award; the Ebenezer A.M.E. Church Woman of Distinction Award; the Columbus School for Girls' CSG Alumnae Award; the 2005 Michigan Anti-Defamation League's Women of Achievement Award; the 2008 Thurgood Marshall College Fund's Award of Excellence; the Michigan Women's Foundation's 2008 Women of Achievement and Courage Award; the 2008 "Powerful Woman of Purpose" Award presented by the Rhonda Walker Foundation; the Olivet College 2009 Leadership in Individual & Social Responsibility Award; and the Fair Housing Center of Metro Detroit's 2013 "Fair Housing Attorney Appreciation Award."

Denise Page Hood was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on August 22, 2002.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Denise Page Hood was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on August 22, 2002, in Detroit, Michigan, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Federal district court judge The Honorable Denise Page Hood (1952 -) has served on the bench of Detroit's 36th District Court, the Recorder's Court and Wayne County Circuit Court. Hood was later appointed to the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, where she presides over both criminal and civil cases.

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:

Hood, Denise Page, 1952-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Hood, Denise Page, 1952---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Federal District Court Judge

HistoryMakers® Category:

LawMakers

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 Denise Page Hood, August 22, 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 Denise Page Hood, Section
A2002_153_001_001, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Denise Page Hood was born on February 21, 1952 in Columbus, Ohio, to Nancy Ann Penn Page, born in 1933, and Richard Arlen Page, born in 1932, both also from Columbus. Her maternal grandparents, Susan Belle Hodge Penn and Walter Montbelieus Staples Penn, raised their family in Hilltop, in Columbus, Ohio, where they were well-known in the black community there. Her paternal grandparents, Reverend Thomas Nelson Page and Perina Eliza Page, also raised their family in Columbus, Ohio. Hood was very close to her paternal grandfather, a minister, who encouraged her to question what she learned. Her paternal grandmother's family was from southern Ohio and came from a line of farmers, and they later sold land they owned to the U.S. Forest Service. Hood grew up in Hilltop in Columbus and attended Eastgate Elementary School. As a child, she got good grades but elementary school did not challenge her. Hood grew up with many cousins and relatives in Hilltop in Columbus, Ohio, and she remains close to her family.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Denise Page Hood, Section
A2002_153_001_002, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Denise Page Hood grew up in the Hilltop neighborhood in Columbus, Ohio, surrounded by her grandparents and many cousins. She attended Eastgate Elementary school and Eastmoor Junior High School until 1966. Hood took piano lessons at Vincent Walters Music Academy and played at her church, St. Paul's, where her paternal grandfather was a minister. She attended the private Columbus School for Girls for high school from 1966 to 1970, where she was one of the few black students there. She was challenged academically there and mentored by teachers, although she experienced instances of discrimination. In 1970, she entered Yale University in Connecticut, majoring in African American Studies. She developed interests in film, psychology, and African American culture while a student at Yale University, and Hood then became interested in graduate school and becoming a professor.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Denise Page Hood, Section
A2002_153_001_003, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Denise Page Hood graduated from Yale University in Connecticut in 1974 with a degree in African American Studies, and she then entered Columbia University Law School in New York. Her experience at Columbia University Law School differed from the more liberal Yale University. She married her husband, Nick Hood, in 1976 and then graduated from law school in 1977. She and her husband moved to his hometown of Detroit, Michigan in 1977, where Hood worked for the city of Detroit Law Department until 1982. Her father in law, Noah Hood, was a minister like her husband, as well as a local politician. After practicing law for five years with the Detroit, Michigan Law Department, Hood's family and colleagues encouraged her to campaign for District Court Judge, and she was elected the judge for Detroit, Michigan's 36th district in 1983. Following her tenure at the District Court, she was appointed to fill a vacancy at the Recorder's Court from 1989 to 1992, where she presided over many criminal cases.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Denise Page Hood, Section
A2002_153_001_004, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Denise Page Hood served as a judge for the Recorder's Court in Detroit, Michigan until 1992, when she then campaigned to be a Wayne County,

Michigan, Circuit Court judge. As a County judge, she presided over cases for a larger and more diverse community than at the Detroit, Michigan Recorder's Court. Then, in 1994, Hood was appointed under President William J. Clinton's administration as a U.S. District Court Federal judge. She was the first African American federal judge in twelve years, since Judges Anna Diggs Taylor and Julian Cook. Hood describes her experiences as an African American female during the selection process, and she describes the types of cases she presided over. She describes one of her most memorable cases as presiding over the Dow Corning bankruptcy settlement. Hood then reflects on what makes an effective and fair judge, and she describes her role in judicial reform. Then, she talks about what she wants her legacy to be.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Denise Page Hood, Section A2002_153_001_005, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Denise Page Hood was appointed a U.S. Federal Judge in Detroit, Michigan's District Court in 1994. Her husband, Nick Hood, is a minister at Plymouth United Church of Christ in Detroit, and Hood talks about her role as a minister's wife. Hood then talks about her involvement with the National Organization of Women and the women's movement, describing the sexism she and her colleagues have faced in the legal profession. She reflects on the progress of women in the legal and business world, and describes her hopes and concerns for the black community. Then, Hood reflects on what her paternal grandfather, Thomas Page, would think of her career. Hood then narrates her photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Denise Page Hood, Section A2002_153_001_006, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Denise Page Hood narrates her photographs.