

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Shauna Graves-Robertson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Graves-Robertson, Shauna, 1958-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Shauna Graves-Robertson,
Dates:	March 15, 2008
Bulk Dates:	2008
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:09:25).
Abstract:	Municipal court judge The Honorable Shauna Graves-Robertson (1958 -) practiced as an attorney in the areas of criminal defense and family and employment law in the State of Utah. In 1999, Graves-Robertson was appointed to the Salt Lake County Justice Court, where she is the presiding judge. Graves-Robertson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 15, 2008, in Salt Lake City, Utah. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2008_053
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Utah Third District Justice Court judge Shauna Marie Graves-Robertson was born on June 22, 1958, in Salt Lake City, Utah, where she was raised by her mother Ms. Augustine C. Morgan. Robertson attended Salt Lake City's Jefferson Elementary and Matheson Elementary Schools. In 1976, she graduated from West High School, where she was a staff member of the school's newspaper and the singing group, West High Acappella.

After graduating, Graves-Robertson enrolled at Arizona State University where she received her B.S. degree in criminal justice in 1980. She later attended American University in Washington, D.C., and completed an internship with Senator Orrin G. Hatch and the Virginia Parole and Probation Department. In 1982, Graves-Robertson was hired as a program specialist for the Division of Youth Corrections, Office of Standards and Evaluations in Salt Lake City, Utah. She went on to work as a treatment counselor, observing, testing and reporting the behavior of delinquent youth. In 1984, Graves-Robertson was appointed by Governor Scott M. Matheson to head the State Office of Black Affairs. While serving in that capacity, she worked with community leaders and organizations to promote economic development throughout minority communities. Graves-Robertson then earned her M.A. degree in public administration from the University of Utah in 1987. In 1989, Graves-Robertson worked as a law clerk for the office of the Attorney General, and one year later, she earned her J.D. degree from the University of Utah.

As an attorney, Graves-Robertson practiced in the areas of criminal defense and family and employment law. She has worked with Utah Legal Defenders Association and Innovations International, Inc., where she trained the members of major corporations in the areas of diversity and empowerment throughout the United States and Canada. In 1999, Graves-Robertson was appointed to the Salt Lake County Justice Court, where she is the presiding judge.

Graves-Robertson has served on the boards of the Alberta Henry Foundation and Youth and Families with Promise. She is also a member of the National Bar Association, Minority Bar Association, the National Association of Women Lawyers and the American Bar Association.

Graves-Robertson lives in Salt Lake City, Utah with her husband, John. They have three daughters Jacquenita, Jordan and Joey.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Shauna Graves-Robertson was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 15, 2008, in Salt Lake City, Utah, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Municipal court judge The Honorable Shauna Graves-Robertson (1958 -) practiced as an attorney in the areas of criminal defense and family and employment law in the State of Utah. In 1999, Graves-Robertson was appointed to the Salt Lake County Justice Court, where she is the presiding judge.

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:

Graves-Robertson, Shauna, 1958-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Graves-Robertson, Shauna, 1958- --Interviews

African American women judges--Interviews

African American women lawyers--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Utah

Occupations:

Municipal 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 Shauna Graves-Robertson, March 15, 2008. 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 Shauna Graves-Robertson, Section B2008_053_001_001, TRT: 0:28:21 ?

Shauna Graves-Robertson recounts her family history and upbringing in Salt Lake City, Utah. Her mother, Augustine Coleman Morgan, was born August 29, 1919 in Fort Worth, Texas to Wallace Coleman and Martha Scott. The Colemans had lived in Texas since the end of slavery, but Augustine settled in Ogden, Utah to find work during the 1940s. Then, Ogden had a sizeable African American community, and Augustine worked as a domestic there and later in Salt Lake City, before receiving her GED and becoming a dietician for a veterans' hospital. Graves-Robertson's father, George William Graves, was born in 1922 in Louisville, Kentucky, and served in the U.S. Navy. Other than that, she knows little about him; she was raised primarily by her stepfather, postal worker Norman B. Morgan, and her godparents, local nightclub owners Frank and Janie Mae Crosby. Graves-Robertson recalls her earliest childhood memories, and the sights, sounds, and smells of growing up in Salt Lake City's working-class Rose Park neighborhood.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Shauna Graves-Robertson, Section B2008_053_001_002, TRT: 0:28:41 ?

Shauna Graves-Robertson attended Jefferson Elementary School and then Matheson Elementary School in Salt Lake City, Utah. She recalls her Scottish principal at Jefferson and the teachers that inspired her at Northwest Junior High School. She enjoyed history early on, and at West High School, her interests included acapella singing and writing for the school paper. As a child, she watched 'Perry Mason,' which inspired her interest in law. At age fifteen, Graves-Robertson participated in a cultural exchange program with New Zealand's Maori people which awakened her to other cultures. After graduating from West High School in 1976, she decided to attend Arizona State University in Tempe, 102 miles from her godmother and her new husband. There, she became an active member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. In 1978, Graves-Robertson entered the Washington Semester Program at American University in Washington, D.C. where she interned with Utah Senator Orrin Hatch and the Virginia Parole and Probation Department.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Shauna Graves-Robertson, Section B2008_053_001_003, TRT: 0:30:29 ?

Shauna Graves-Robertson talks about her early career. At Arizona State University in Tempe, she majored in criminal justice and travelled to the United Kingdom in 1980 to study its justice system. Graves-Robertson compares the American and British legal systems and the status of minorities in the U.K. She also describes Washington, D.C. during the mayoral tenure of HistoryMaker Marion Barry. Upon returning to Salt Lake City, Utah, Graves-Robertson received a Moroni L. Jensen Utah State House Fellowship to work at the Department of Youth Corrections until 1984, when she was appointed to head the Utah State Office of Black Affairs. She enrolled in the S.J. Quinney College of Law at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, but withdrew after her first year to pursue theater. She returned to the university and received her J.D. degree in 1990. She then worked in the Utah Attorney General's office, before

becoming a motivational speaker and diversity trainer for Innovations International, a human resource firm.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Shauna Graves-Robertson, Section B2008_053_001_004, TRT: 0:29:04 ?

Shauna Graves-Robertson describes her legal and judicial career. She met her husband, John Robertson, through his siblings, who were childhood friends of hers, and the two married in 1993. They have three children. In 1994, Graves-Robinson joined the Salt Lake Legal Defenders Association, a criminal defense practice in Salt Lake City, Utah, whose clients are largely impecunious. She recounts her experience there and talks about crime in Utah, including the epidemic of crystal methamphetamine production and use. Graves-Robertson also talks about her professional and civic involvement through the National Association of Women Judges, several bar associations, and the Alberta Henry Education Foundation, which provides scholarships for Utah students. She became Utah's first African American female judge when she was appointed to serve as a municipal judge in Salt Lake County in 1998. She describes her experience on the bench, her judicial philosophy, and her most difficult cases.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Shauna Graves-Robertson, Section B2008_053_001_005, TRT: 0:12:50 ?

Shauna Graves-Robertson reflects upon her life and career. She talks about her hopes and concerns for the African-American community, her legacy, her family, and how she would like to be remembered. Graves-Robertson concludes her interview by narrating her personal photographs.