

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Elbra Wedgeworth

Overview of the Collection

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| Repository: | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com |
| Creator: | Wedgeworth, Elbra, 1956- |
| Title: | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Elbra Wedgeworth, |
| Dates: | November 5, 2008 |
| Bulk Dates: | 2008 |
| Physical Description: | 4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:34:59). |
| Abstract: | City council member The Honorable Elbra Wedgeworth (1956 -) served as Denver City Council President Pro Tempore, City Council President and chief government and community-relations officer for Denver Health, Colorado's primary health services institution. Wedgeworth was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 5, 2008, in Denver, Colorado. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| Identification: | A2008_123 |
| Language: | The interview and records are in English. |

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Former Denver City Councilwoman Elbra Mae Wedgeworth was born on January 23, 1956 in Denver, Colorado to Castella Price and Walter Wedgeworth, Sr. She grew up the youngest of six children in public housing in the Curtis Park neighborhood of Denver and attended high school at Manual High School. She received her B.A. degree in sociology/anthropology from the University of Redlands near Los Angeles in 1978.

Wedgeworth began her career in public service in 1989 as a City Council Senior Analyst, which ignited her interest in politics. From 1994 through 1996, she was the Clerk and Recorder for the City and County of Denver. She served in Mayor Wellington Webb's administration as a member of the Denver Election Commission, the board of county commissioners. Wedgeworth was the Director of Community Relations and Philanthropic Affairs at the Denver Health and Hospital Authority from 1996 through 1999. In 1999, Wedgeworth was elected to a seat on the Denver City Council representing District 8. She served as City Council President Pro Tempore from July 2001 to July 2002 and as Denver City Council President from July 2003 to July 2005. In 2007, she resigned from her seat on the Denver City Council and accepted the position of as the Chief Government and Community Relations Officer for Denver Health, Colorado's primary health services institution. In addition, Wedgeworth as the President and Chair of the Board for the Denver 2008 Convention Host Committee, she was responsible for bringing the Democratic National Convention to Denver in August of 2008.

The Denver Business Journal selected Wedgeworth as one of the eight outstanding Women in Business in 2001. She also holds the distinction of being the only person in recent memory to have worked for all three branches of city government in Denver: the city council, the Auditor's Office, and the Mayor's Office.

Wedgeworth was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on November 5, 2008.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Elbra Wedgeworth was conducted by Denise Gines on November 5, 2008, in Denver, Colorado, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. City council member The Honorable Elbra Wedgeworth (1956 -) served as Denver City Council President Pro Tempore, City Council President and chief government and community-relations officer for Denver Health, Colorado's primary health services institution.

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:

Wedgeworth, Elbra, 1956-

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Wedgeworth, Elbra, 1956- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

City Council Member

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 Elbra Wedgeworth, November 5, 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 Elbra Wedgeworth, Section
A2008_123_001_001, TRT: 0:29:25 ?

The Honorable Elbra Wedgeworth was born on January 23, 1956 in Denver, Colorado to Castella Price Wedgeworth and Walter Wedgeworth, Sr. Her father was born in Fort Worth, Texas, and was raised in Denver by his mother, Armonia Wedgeworth Whiting. Wedgeworth's mother was born in Eufaula, Oklahoma to Alice Price and sharecropper Fred Price. They later moved to

Denver, where Wedgeworth's parents met at Manual High School. Upon graduating, the couple married; and Wedgeworth's father found work at the nearby Lowry Air Force Base, while her mother raised six children, including Wedgeworth, in a housing project in Denver's Curtis Park area. There, Wedgeworth attended Gilpin Elementary School. Her family later moved to the Cole neighborhood, where she attended Columbine Elementary School, Cole Junior High School and Manual High School. She remembers her teachers, including Ann Simpson Applewhite and Sal Carpio, the latter of whom went on to direct the Denver Housing Authority.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Elbra Wedgeworth, Section A2008_123_001_002, TRT: 0:28:45 ?

The Honorable Elbra Wedgeworth was a student at Cole Junior High School in Denver, Colorado in 1968, when local Black Panther Party leader Lauren Watson organized a boycott at the school. Wedgeworth went on to attend Manual High School, where she joined the cheerleading and track teams. Upon graduating in 1974, Wedgeworth studied sociology, anthropology and theater at the University of Redlands in Redlands, California. After earning a degree in 1978, Wedgeworth returned to Denver, where she worked for an anti-crime program in the Five Points neighborhood, and as a personnel assistant at Quality Inns International, Inc. and Denver's Cosmopolitan Hotel. She became interested in city government while assisting with Ann Duckett's campaign for state representative; and, in 1989, was hired as a staff analyst by Denver City Council Director John Bennett. Wedgeworth also worked with Mayor Wellington Webb and CEO Patricia Gabow at the Denver Health Foundation, before being elected to the Denver City Council in 1999.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Elbra Wedgeworth, Section A2008_123_001_003, TRT: 0:28:07 ?

The Honorable Elbra Wedgeworth served from 1999 as the city council representative for District 8 of Denver, Colorado. In this role, she established the Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library, secured funds for the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial statue and worked with the Denver Housing Authority to improve neglected neighborhoods. In 2003, Wedgeworth was elected president of the city council, and began working closely with Mayor John Hickenlooper. During her tenure, she spearheaded a successful campaign to host the 2008 Democratic National Convention in Denver. She served as the president and chairperson of the host committee, which included U.S. Senator Kenneth Salazar, U.S. Representative Diana DeGette, Governor Bill Ritter and attorney Steven W. Farber. She also worked with Chairwoman Leah D. Daughtry of the Democratic National Convention Committee. Wedgeworth left the Denver City Council in 2007 to return to Denver Health at the request of CEO Patricia Gabow.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Elbra Wedgeworth, Section A2008_123_001_004, TRT: 0:08:42 ?

The Honorable Elbra Wedgeworth helped establish the Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library in Denver, Colorado. She talks about the importance of preserving African American history, and shares the history of the library, which was named in honor of Elvin R. Caldwell, the first African American representative on the Denver City Council; and Omar Blair, Denver's first African American school board president. Wedgeworth describes her hopes and concerns for the African American community, and shares a message to future generations. She also reflects upon her life, legacy and how she would like to be remembered.