

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with H. Carl McCall

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	McCall, H. Carl
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with H. Carl McCall,
Dates:	June 18, 2014
Bulk Dates:	2014
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:37:37).
Abstract:	Federal government official and civic leader H. Carl McCall (1935 -) became the comptroller of New York State in 1994. He was the first African American to be elected to a statewide office in New York. McCall was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 18, 2014, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2014_146
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Government official and civic leader H. Carl McCall was born on October 17, 1935 in Boston, Massachusetts to Herman McCall and Caroleasa Ray. He and his five siblings were raised in Boston's Roxbury community. In 1954, McCall graduated from Roxbury Memorial High School, where he was president of his class. He received his B.A. degree in government from Dartmouth College in 1958, and went on to attend the University of Edinburgh in the United Kingdom. He also received his M.Div. degree from Andover Newton Theological Seminary and became an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ.

McCall worked first as a high school teacher and a bank manager, and then joined the United States Army in the 1960s. By the late 1960s, he moved to New York City to work for church outreach and was subsequently appointed by Mayor John Lindsay to head the Commission Against Poverty. In 1971, McCall helped to found and served as president of the Inner City Broadcasting Corporation. He was then elected to the New York State Senate representing the upper Manhattan district of New York City in 1975, and went on to serve three terms. In 1979, McCall was appointed as an ambassador for the U.S. delegation to the United Nations by President Jimmy Carter. He unsuccessfully ran for Lieutenant Governor in 1982, but was named the state's commissioner of human rights by Mario Cuomo in 1983. McCall then served as vice president of Citicorp from 1985 to 1993, and from 1991 to 1993, he served as president of the New York City Board of Education under Mayor David N. Dinkins.

In 1993, McCall became the first African American elected as the New York State comptroller after winning a special election. He was reelected to the position in 1994 and in 1998. McCall then ran for and won the Democratic primary for Governor of New York in 2002, but was defeated in the general election. He stepped down from his post as comptroller in 2003, and later started a financial services firm called Convent Capital.

McCall was a member of the board of the New York Stock Exchange from 1999 to 2003. He also sat on the board of the Apollo Theater Foundation, Inc., and is a member of the Fiscal Control Board for Buffalo, New York. He

has also served on the boards of directors for TYCO International, New Plan Realty, TAG Entertainment Corporation, Ariel Investments, and as chair of the New York State Public Higher Education Conference Board. In 2011, McCall was appointed chairman of the State University of New York Board of Trustees. He is the recipient of nine honorary degrees and was awarded the Nelson Rockefeller Distinguished Public Service Award from the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy at the University of Albany in 2003.

McCall is married to Dr. Joyce F. Brown, the president of the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. He has one daughter, Marci.

Carl McCall was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on June 18, 2014.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with H. Carl McCall was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on June 18, 2014, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Federal government official and civic leader H. Carl McCall (1935 -) became the comptroller of New York State in 1994. He was the first African American to be elected to a statewide office in New York.

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:

McCall, H. Carl

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
McCall, H. Carl--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Federal Government Official

Civic Leader

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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 H. Carl McCall, June 18, 2014. 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 H. Carl McCall, Section A2014_146_001_001, TRT: 1:30:52 ?

H. Carl McCall was born on October 17, 1935 in Boston, Massachusetts to Caroleasa Ray and Herman McCall. His maternal grandparents, Mamie Ray and Calvin Ray, migrated from the South to Boston, Massachusetts, where McCall's mother was born. McCall's father was from Waycross, Georgia, and came to Boston to work as a waiter on the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad. He eventually lost his job due to the rise of the passenger airline industry, and left the family when McCall was eleven years old. From that time, McCall and his siblings were raised by their mother and maternal grandparents in the predominantly black Roxbury neighborhood of Boston. There, McCall's mentors included the prominent lawyer Matthew Bullock, who was a graduate of Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. With Bullock's help, McCall secured financial aid to attend Dartmouth College, where he enrolled after graduating from Roxbury Memorial High School.

Video Oral History Interview with H. Carl McCall, Section A2014_146_001_002, TRT: 2:31:43 ?

H. Carl McCall received a large scholarship to attend Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, where he enrolled in 1954. He joined the formerly all-white Gamma Delta Chi Fraternity, and was elected to the student government. He also served on the Palaeopitus, which was the executive committee for the school's student organizational leadership. During the summers, McCall was recruited by one of his mentors, Reverend Michael E. Haynes, to work as a counselor at the all-black Breezy Meadows Camp in Holliston, Massachusetts. McCall also joined the Reserve Officers' Training Corps at Dartmouth College. Upon graduating in 1958, he served for six months at Fort Benning in Georgia. There, he challenged the fort's discriminatory housing policies, which required segregated rooming assignments. Initially, the commandant dismissed his concerns, but McCall eventually persuaded him to integrate the base. Upon returning to Boston, McCall secured a teaching position at Jamaica Plain High School.

Video Oral History Interview with H. Carl McCall, Section A2014_146_001_003, TRT: 3:31:58 ?

H. Carl McCall enrolled in a master's program at the Andover Newton Theological School in Newton, Massachusetts around 1960. He spent one year studying abroad at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, where he was influenced by the Scottish theologian John Baillie. McCall then resumed his studies at the Andover Newton Theological School. During his final year there, he opened a mission in the Dorchester neighborhood of Boston, Massachusetts, where he offered community programs and social services. Through this work, McCall was recruited to join the New York City Mission Society in 1964. He moved to Brooklyn, New York, where he organized the local ministers to boycott a development project that refused to hire black and Puerto Rican workers. He also submitted a proposal to Governor Nelson Rockefeller, who required that the developer begin hiring minorities. McCall went on to work for the Taconic Foundation, whose grantees included the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation led by Franklin A. Thomas.

Video Oral History Interview with H. Carl McCall, Section A2014_146_001_004, TRT: 4:28:59 ?

H. Carl McCall served as a deputy administrator of the New York City Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services under Mayor John

Lindsay. After stepping down from that position, McCall partnered with Percy Sutton to found the Inner City Broadcasting Corporation, which established the first black-owned radio station in New York in 1972. They also purchased the New York Amsterdam News, where McCall served as chairman of the editorial board. Because of his work in media and public service, McCall was encouraged to run for the New York State Senate by Percy Sutton and his associates, including Charles B. Rangel, Basil Paterson and David N. Dinkins. After his election in 1975, McCall focused on developing relationships with constituents in Upstate New York, and bridging the gap between urban and rural New Yorkers. McCall served as a state senator until 1980, when he was appointed as an ambassador to the United Nations by President James Earl Carter, Jr.

Video Oral History Interview with H. Carl McCall, Section A2014_146_001_005, TRT: 5:29:04 ?

H. Carl McCall served as an ambassador to the United Nations for one year, and then became a vice president of the WNET-TV public broadcasting station in 1981. After an unsuccessful bid for lieutenant governor, McCall secured a position at Citibank, N.A., where he oversaw branch operations and worked in government relations. In 1990, David N. Dinkins became the mayor of New York City, and appointed McCall as the president of the New York City Department of Education. In this capacity, McCall focused on minority representation and teacher preparation. In 1993, the New York State Legislature selected McCall to serve as comptroller, which was the chief financial position in New York State. In 1994, McCall's seat was challenged by Herbert London, but he retained the comptrollership by a slim margin. In the same year, New York elected Mayor Rudy Giuliani, who attempted to block McCall from auditing the city. The case reached the New York Court of Appeals, where the audit was upheld.

Video Oral History Interview with H. Carl McCall, Section A2014_146_001_006, TRT: 6:34:52 ?

H. Carl McCall was elected to the board of the New York Stock Exchange in 1997. In 2001, it was revealed that the board president, Richard Grasso, had accrued a \$120 million pension, which launched an investigation that led to his resignation. As interim president, McCall conducted the search for Grasso's replacement, and selected Citibank CEO John S. Reed. In 2002, McCall decided to run for governor of New York against the incumbent George Pataki. McCall defeated Anthony Cuomo in the Democratic primary election, but lost the general election to Pataki, despite receiving endorsements from Willie L. Brown, Richard M. Daley, Eliot Spitzer and the Clintons. After the election, McCall joined a number of corporate boards, including Tyco International, New Plan Excel Realty Trust, Inc., Ariel Investments and Tag Entertainment. In 2011, McCall was appointed as chairman of the board for the State University of New York System by Governor Andrew Cuomo.

Video Oral History Interview with H. Carl McCall, Section A2014_146_001_007, TRT: 7:30:09 ?

H. Carl McCall served as the chairman of the board for the State University of New York System (SUNY). In this capacity, he worked with Governor Andrew Cuomo to initiate a program called StartUP NY, which offered tax breaks to businesses for partnering with SUNY institutions for hiring, internships and research. At this point in the interview, McCall talks about the future of public education in New York State, and shares his thoughts on public education funding. He talks about income inequality and the wage gap in New York, as well as the governmental neglect of the middle class. McCall concludes the interview by reflecting upon his life and legacy, as well as his hopes and concerns for the African American community.