

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Gabrielle Kirk McDonald

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	McDonald, Gabrielle Kirk
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Gabrielle Kirk McDonald,
Dates:	August 27, 2014
Bulk Dates:	2014
Physical Description:	10 uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:52:16).
Abstract:	Judge and educator The Honorable Gabrielle Kirk McDonald (1942 -) was the first African American to be appointed to the federal bench in Texas and the third African American woman federal judge in the country. She also served as a judge on the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and as an arbitrator on the Iran-United States Claims Tribunal. McDonald was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 27, 2014, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2014_184
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Judge Gabrielle Kirk McDonald was born on April 12, 1942 in St. Paul, Minnesota to James Kirk and Frances English. McDonald was raised in Manhattan, New York and in Teaneck, New Jersey, where she graduated from Teaneck High School in 1959. In the early 1960s, she attended Boston University and Hunter College. She then went on to attend Howard University School of Law, where she was Notes Editor for the *Howard Law Journal* and received several academic awards. McDonald graduated cum laude and first in her class with her LL.B. degree in 1966.

Upon graduation, McDonald was hired as a staff attorney for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. From 1969 to 1979, she was a founding partner, with her then-husband, attorney Mark T. McDonald, of the Houston, Texas law firm of McDonald & McDonald. While in private practice, she also taught law as an assistant professor at the Thurgood Marshall School of Law, Texas Southern University, and then as a lecturer at the University of Texas School of Law.

In 1979, McDonald was appointed as a judge on the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas. She was the first African American to be appointed to the federal bench in Texas (and the South) and only the third African American woman federal judge in the country. McDonald resigned from the bench in 1988 and joined the law firm of Matthews & Branscomb. She also returned to academia, teaching first at St. Mary's University School of Law, and then at the Thurgood Marshall School of Law. In 1991, she became counsel to the law firm of Walker & Satterthwaite, and later served as Special Counsel to the Chairman on Human Rights for Freeport-McMoRan, Inc.

In 1993, McDonald received the highest number of votes from the General Assembly of the United Nations and served as one of eleven judges on the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. In 1997, she became the Tribunal's president. Then, in 2001, McDonald was called to serve as an arbitrator on the Iran-United States Claims Tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands, where she remained until her retirement in 2013.

Her publications include the co-edited volume, *Substantive and Procedural Aspects of International Criminal Law: The Experience of International and National Courts*, and numerous articles including *The International Criminal Tribunals: Crime and Punishment in the International Arena*, and *Problems, Obstacles and Achievements of the ICTY*.

McDonald was a member of the Board of Trustees of Howard University for twenty-three years. She also served on boards for the American Bar Association Human Rights Center and the American Arbitration Association, as well as on the Genocide Prevention Task Force. In 2014, she was elected Honorary President of the American Society of International Law. Her honors include the National Bar Association's first Equal Justice and Ronald Brown International Law Awards; the American Society of International Law's Goler T. Butcher Award for Human Rights; the Open Society Institute's first Women Groundbreakers in International Justice Award; the Dorothy Height Lifetime Achievement Award; and the Doctor of Laws *Honoris Causa* from several institutions. She was inducted into the Texas Women's Hall of Fame in 1993 and the National Bar Association Hall of Fame in 2008.

McDonald has two children, Michael and Stacy, who are both lawyers.

Gabrielle Kirk McDonald was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on August 27, 2014.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Gabrielle Kirk McDonald was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on August 27, 2014, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 10 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Judge and educator The Honorable Gabrielle Kirk McDonald (1942 -) was the first African American to be appointed to the federal bench in Texas and the third African American woman federal judge in the country. She also served as a judge on the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and as an arbitrator on the Iran-United States Claims Tribunal.

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:

McDonald, Gabrielle Kirk

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

McDonald, Gabrielle Kirk--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Judge

Educator

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 Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, August 27, 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 The Honorable Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, Section A2014_184_001_001, TRT: 1:32:28 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, Section A2014_184_001_002, TRT: 2:30:33 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, Section A2014_184_001_003, TRT: 3:29:30 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, Section A2014_184_001_004, TRT: 4:35:09 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, Section A2014_184_001_005, TRT: 5:35:39 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, Section A2014_184_001_006, TRT: 6:25:46 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, Section A2014_184_001_007, TRT: 7:32:25 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, Section A2014_184_001_008, TRT: 8:33:06 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, Section A2014_184_001_009, TRT: 9:31:48 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, Section A2014_184_001_010, TRT: 10:05:52 ?