

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Penfield W. Tate III

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Tate, Penfield W., 1956-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Penfield W. Tate III,
Dates:	September 26, 2016
Bulk Dates:	2016
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:51:53).
Abstract:	State government official Penfield W. Tate III (1956 -) founded the law firm of Tate & Tate before serving as a leader of the Colorado Democratic Party, a Colorado State Senator, and a Colorado State Representative. Tate was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on September 26, 2016, in Denver, Colorado. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2016_062
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Lawyer and state government official Penfield W. Tate III was born on May 19, 1956 to Ellen Mildred Tate and Penfield W. Tate II. Tate grew up on military bases while his father served in the U.S. Army. His family eventually settled in Boulder, Colorado, where Tate's father became the city's first African American city councilman and mayor. Tate earned his B.A. degree in sociology at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado in 1978, and his J.D. degree from Antioch School of Law in Washington, D.C. in 1981.

Upon graduation from law school, Tate obtained a position as a trade regulation attorney with the Denver Regional Office of the Federal Trade Commission. In 1984, Tate left the Federal Trade Commission and joined the law firm of Trimble, Tate & Nulan, founded by his father seven years earlier. He became a partner with the firm in 1988. In 1990, Tate returned to public service in an administrative role at Denver Mayor Federico Peña's office, but rejoined Trimble, Tate & Nulan in 1991 once Mayor Pena's term ended. The following year, he and his father founded the law firm of Tate & Tate, P.C. Shortly after founding the new firm, Tate took a leave of absence to become executive director of the Colorado Department of Administration. In 1994, he was elected to the vice chairmanship of the Colorado Democratic Party, which he resigned in 1996 during his successful run for Colorado State House. The following year, he was elected to the the Colorado State House of Representatives, representing the 8th District. In 2000, Tate was elected to serve the 33rd District in the Colorado State Senate. In 2003, he resigned from this position to run for Mayor of Denver, but was defeated. He returned to public finance law practice, and joined the law firm of Kutak Rock in 2015, where he represented public entities, lenders, and underwriters engaged in financing essential public improvements, and advised local and state governments. He was also a frequent panelist on the political talk show Colorado Inside Out.

Tate has served as a trustee of the Colorado Children's Chorale and on the board of Denver Water, the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, and the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority. He was named the 2004 Father of the Year by the National Father's Day Coalition and the American Diabetes Association.

Penfield W. Tate III was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on September 25, 2016.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Penfield W. Tate III was conducted by Larry Crowe on September 26, 2016, in Denver, Colorado, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. State government official Penfield W. Tate III (1956 -) founded the law firm of Tate & Tate before serving as a leader of the Colorado Democratic Party, a Colorado State Senator, and a Colorado State Representative.

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:

Tate, Penfield W., 1956-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Tate, Penfield W., 1956- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

State Government Official

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 Penfield W. Tate III, September 26, 2016. 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 Penfield W. Tate III, Section A2016_062_001_001, TRT: 1:30:26 ?

Penfield W. Tate III was born on May 19, 1956 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Ellen Cooper Tate and Penfield W. Tate II. His maternal grandfather, Harold Cooper, emigrated from Nassau, Bahamas and settled in Philadelphia,

Pennsylvania, where he attended seminary school and met his wife, Pauline Cooper. They raised Tate's mother in Philadelphia, where she attended Simon Gratz High School. His paternal grandparents, Penfield Tate and Vera Houston Tate, migrated from the South in search of work and settled in New Philadelphia, Ohio. Tate's father was born there, and went on to become the first all-American football player at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. Tate's parents met and married in Philadelphia while his father was completing his ROTC training. After graduating from college, he worked in the military, and attended law school at night. Growing up, Tate's family moved around frequently before settling in Boulder, Colorado, where his father was elected mayor in 1973.

Video Oral History Interview with Penfield W. Tate III, Section A2016_062_001_002, TRT: 2:30:08 ?

Penfield W. Tate III spent the majority of his childhood on various U.S. military bases in places like Chicago, Illinois and Fort Sill, Oklahoma. When his father, Penfield W. Tate II, was sent to Neckarsulm, Germany, Tate attended school on the military base. While there, he experienced racism from the teachers who devoted most of their attention to the white students, and his football coaches who refused to give the black athletes adequate equipment. Tate's family later settled in Boulder, Colorado, where he attended University Hill Intermediate School and Boulder High School. He participated in student government, and excelled in math and science. During this period, Tate's father retired from the military, and graduated with his law degree. He eventually ran for city council, and was elected in 1971. That same year, Tate graduated from high school, and entered Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado, where his father also served as a human rights counselor.

Video Oral History Interview with Penfield W. Tate III, Section A2016_062_001_003, TRT: 3:29:10 ?

Penfield W. Tate III attended Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado, where he majored in sociology. He also became interested in pursuing a law career; and upon graduating, enrolled at Antioch School of Law in Washington, D.C. in 1978. During this period, he did contract work for private law firms, and worked for the Federal Aviation Administration, the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Supreme Court. After earning his J.D. degree in 1981, he landed a position with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in Denver, Colorado. Tate stayed with the FTC until 1984, and then joined his father's minority owned law firm, Trimble, Tate, Nulan, Evans and Holden P.C. At that time, he and his father handled a number of civil rights and excessive force cases. Later, Tate became an aide in Denver Mayor Federico Peña's office. In this capacity, he worked on the financial development for the Denver International Airport, and with the Denver Housing Authority on issues of affordable housing.

Video Oral History Interview with Penfield W. Tate III, Section A2016_062_001_004, TRT: 4:29:20 ?

Penfield W. Tate III worked in the administration of Mayor Federico Peña in Denver, Colorado until 1991. At that time, Wellington Webb was elected mayor, and replaced the previous staff. Tate then joined the office of Colorado Governor Roy Romer, and served as the executive director of the Colorado Department of Personnel and Administration. In this position, Tate was responsible for procuring and managing state government contracts for building and development. He was also a member of the Democratic National Committee, and served as a delegate for the 1992 Democratic National

Convention. In 1994, Tate was elected as the second vice chair of the Colorado Democratic Party. However, later in the year his father died unexpectedly, and Tate decided to resign from his political positions to manage his father's law firm Trimble, Tate, Nulan, Evans and Holden P.C. Tate returned to politics in 1997 when he was elected to the Colorado House of Representatives. In 2000, he was elected to the Colorado State Senate.

Video Oral History Interview with Penfield W. Tate III, Section A2016_062_001_005, TRT: 5:29:36 ?

Penfield W. Tate III served in the Colorado State Senate from 2001 to 2003. In 2003, he resigned from office and ran for mayor of Denver. He finished fourth in the primaries, and endorsed John Hickenlooper in the general election, later serving as the co-chair of his transition team. In 2005, he was appointed to the Denver Board of Water Commissioners, which presided over Denver's water supply. As a board member, Tate was involved with the Compact of Colorado Communities, which was an agreement that helped improve infrastructure and distribute water to western communities. In 2007, Tate and his partners made the decision to close the law firm of Trimble, Tate, Nulan, Evans and Holden P.C. He then joined Greenberg Traurig LLP, and later Kutak Rock LLP. Tate also appeared as a political commentator on KBDI-TV on 'Colorado Inside Out' and as an affiliate on KCNC-TV. At this point, he describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community, and talks about immigration and third party politics.

Video Oral History Interview with Penfield W. Tate III, Section A2016_062_001_006, TRT: 6:08:57 ?

Penfield W. Tate III reflects upon his childhood growing up in Chicago, Illinois. He also reflects upon his legacy and how he would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with Penfield W. Tate III, Section A2016_062_001_007, TRT: 7:14:16 ?

Penfield W. Tate III narrates his photographs.