

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Garnet Coleman

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Coleman, Garnet, 1961-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Garnet Coleman,
Dates:	December 2, 2016
Bulk Dates:	2016
Physical Description:	4 uncompressed MOV digital video files (1:54:32).
Abstract:	State representative Garnet Coleman (1961 -) was elected to serve Houston's historic Third Ward in the Texas House of Representatives in 1991. He went on to serve as chair of the Legislative Study Group and County Affairs Committee, and on the Public Health Committee as well as the House Select Committee for Mental Health. Coleman was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 2, 2016, in Houston, Texas. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2016_139
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

State representative Garnet Coleman was born on September 8, 1961 in Washington, D.C. to Gloria Jones Coleman and Dr. John B. Coleman. Coleman was raised in Houston, Texas, where his father worked as the chief of obstetrics and gynecology at Houston's Riverside General Hospital. He also served as the first African American appointee to the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents in 1977. Coleman graduated from Jack Yates Senior High School in 1979, and entered Howard University in Washington, D.C. but returned to Houston, where he earned his B.A. degree in political science from the University of Saint Thomas in 1990. Coleman later completed Harvard University's Senior Executive Program for State and Local Government.

Coleman began his political career in 1988 as a delegate to the Texas State Democratic Convention. In 1990, he served as precinct chair of his local Democratic Precinct Convention, and was elected to serve as a Texas state representative in 1991. Coleman defeated longtime civic leader Reverend Jew Don Boney, Jr. in a runoff election for the seat left vacant by the passing of Larry Q. Evans. In 1991, Coleman also founded S.M.A.R.T. Kids, a youth development and tutoring program. In 1992, Coleman served as the Harris County field director for Bill Clinton's presidential campaign, and as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention. In addition to his service as a state representative, Coleman was elected chair of the Legislative Study Group in 2003. As chairman, Coleman advocated to preserve Texas' top ten percent rule, which assisted historically underrepresented students by automatically admitting the Texas' top performing high school students to Texas state universities. During President Barack Obama's administration, Coleman served as a member of the president's State Legislators for Health Reform. Coleman also served as CEO of Apartments for America, Inc., a non-profit affordable housing corporation.

Coleman served on the House Select Committee for Mental Health and the Public Health Committee as a senior

ranking member, in addition to chairing the County Affairs Committee. He also served on the board of numerous charitable organizations including the South Central Young Mens' Christian Association, the Ensemble Theater, the Third Ward Redevelopment Council, and the Houston Drug and Alcohol Abuse Council. Coleman was honored with the 2005 Reintegration Award from Eli Lilly and Company for his support of public health programs.

Garnet Coleman was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on December 2, 2016.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Garnet Coleman was conducted by Larry Crowe on December 2, 2016, in Houston, Texas, and was recorded on 4 uncompressed MOV digital video files. State representative Garnet Coleman (1961 -) was elected to serve Houston's historic Third Ward in the Texas House of Representatives in 1991. He went on to serve as chair of the Legislative Study Group and County Affairs Committee, and on the Public Health Committee as well as the House Select Committee for Mental Health.

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:

Coleman, Garnet, 1961-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Coleman, Garnet, 1961- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

State Representative

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 Garnet Coleman, December 2, 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 The Honorable Garnet Coleman, Section A2016_139_001_001,
TRT: 1:28:20 ?

The Honorable Garnet Coleman was born on September 8, 1961 in Washington, D.C. to Gloria Jones Coleman and John B. Coleman. During the 19th century, his maternal great-great-grandparents migrated from Spain to Puerto Rico. There, their daughter, Monserrate Collado Fujiwara, married a Japanese immigrant named Gensaburo Fujiwara. They moved to Washington, D.C., where they raised Coleman's maternal grandmother, Shizu Fujiwara Coles. She married Charles Jones, III, who was related to Sally Hemings and the family of Martha Washington. Together, they raised Coleman's mother, who studied at the Miner Teachers College in Washington, D.C. Coleman's paternal grandmother, Clara Hubbard Coleman, was descended from a family of former slaves, who were granted land in East Texas during Reconstruction. She was the second wife of Coleman's paternal grandfather, civic activist William Coleman, Sr.; and raised Coleman's father in the Third Ward of Houston, Texas. Coleman's father aspired to become a doctor from an early age.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Garnet Coleman, Section A2016_139_001_002,
TRT: 2:28:18 ?

The Honorable Garnet Coleman's parents, Gloria Jones Coleman and John B. Coleman, met on the campus of Howard University. After marrying, they remained in Washington, D.C. for a short time, and then moved to the Third Ward of Houston, Texas. There, they lived in a shotgun house owned by Coleman's paternal grandmother, Clara Hubbard Coleman. Coleman's father worked as an obstetrician and gynecologist at the Houston Negro Hospital, where he later became the chief of staff. He also owned J.B.'s Entertainment Center, which hosted acts like The O'Jays and Earth, Wind and Fire. In addition to his work as a physician and entrepreneur, Coleman's father became a civic activist in the Third Ward community. A longtime member of the United Negro College Fund, he served as chairman of the Texas Association of Developing Colleges and as a regent of Texas Southern University and the Texas A&M University System. Coleman's father also work to organize the black community in support of local political candidates.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Garnet Coleman, Section A2016_139_001_003,
TRT: 3:28:26 ?

The Honorable Garnet Coleman grew up in the Third Ward of Houston, Texas, where he began his education at St. Stephen's Episcopal School. After one year, he transferred to River Oaks Elementary School. His father, John B. Coleman, was an advocate for integration, and Coleman was one of a few black students at the school. Coleman completed his primary education at the St. Anne Catholic School. He enrolled at the Strake Jesuit College Preparatory high school, but was forced to leave after the onset of his bipolar disorder. He attended several high schools, and eventually earned a diploma from Bellaire High School in Bellaire, Texas. Aspiring to become a tax lawyer, Coleman studied accounting at the Howard University School of Business. Due to concerns about his mental health, he returned to Houston, where he opened Fredrick's Riverside Wine Bar. After eleven years of college, he earned a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of St. Thomas in Houston.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Garnet Coleman, Section A2016_139_001_004,
TRT: 4:29:28 ?

The Honorable Garnet Coleman enrolled at Howard University in 1979. He majored in accounting, and was mentored by his godfather, the prominent black lawyer Herbert O. Reid, Sr. He also working in Congressman Mickey Leland's

mailing office. In 1981, Coleman returned to Houston, Texas to become the manager of J.B.'s Entertainment, which was a bar owned by his father, John B. Coleman. He excelled in the position, and went on to open Fredrick's Riverside Wine Bar. Using his knowledge of the food service industry, Coleman partnered with his father and Judge John W. Peavy, Jr. to open a chain of ice cream concession stands in Houston's airport and convention centers. Coleman completed his bachelor's degree in political science at the University of St. Thomas in Houston. After graduating, he moved to Austin, Texas to work for the city's Small and Minority Business Resources Department. Following Larry Evans' death in 1991, Coleman successfully campaigned for his vacant seat in the Texas House of Representatives.