



Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Anna Langford

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Anna Langford
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Anna Langford,
Dates:	November 4, 2002
Bulk Dates:	2002
Physical Description:	4 Betacam SP videocassettes (1:50:56).
Abstract:	Civil rights lawyer and city alderman Anna Langford (1917 - 2008) was the first woman elected to Chicago City Council. Langford was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 4, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2002_190
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Chicago alderman and lawyer Anna Langford was born on October 27, 1917 in Springfield, Ohio. Her father, Arthur J. Riggs, died when she was only nine months old and her mother, Alice, died when Langford was eight years old. She lived with her grandmother until 1933, when she moved to Chicago to live with her aunt and uncle. There, she graduated from Hyde Park High School in 1935. Langford attended a trade school to learn office skills and from 1938 to 1956 worked as a typist in the Social Security office, the Election Commissioners Office and in the Office of the Secretary of State.

In February of 1956, after studying for eleven years, she received her J.D. degree from John Marshall Law School at Roosevelt University in Chicago and began an extensive career as a civil rights and criminal lawyer. Langford practiced law throughout the State of Illinois, defended civil rights workers in the 1960s and joined Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Chicago civil rights marches. In 1963 and 1964, she provided free legal services in many areas, including the State of Mississippi.

In 1971, Langford became the first woman elected to the Chicago City Council. Although she was defeated for reelection in 1975, she returned later to serve two additional terms from 1983, the year she retired from practicing law, until 1991, when she retired from the City Council. She has received numerous humanitarian and civic awards and honors, including being inducted into the Book of Legends by the Black Women Lawyers Association for her immeasurable contributions to the City of Chicago as a lawyer and a public servant.

Anna Langford passed away on September 17, 2008 at the age of 90.

Anna Langford was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on November 4, 2002.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Anna Langford was conducted by Adele Hodge on November 4, 2002, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 4 Betacam SP videocassettes. Civil rights lawyer and city alderman Anna Langford (1917 - 2008) was the first woman elected to Chicago City Council.

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:

Langford, Anna

Hodge, Adele (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Anna Langford--Interviews

African American legislators--Illinois--Interviews

City Council members--Illinois--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Chicago (Ill.)

HistoryMakers® Category:

LawMakers

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 Anna Langford, November 4, 2002. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 8/21/2012 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, November 4, 2002

Video Oral History Interview with Anna Langford, Section A2002_190_001_001, TRT: 0:31:26
2002/11/04

This tape contains no interview content. Anna Langford shares photographs of family members and of her life.

Video Oral History Interview with Anna Langford, Section A2002_190_001_002, TRT: 0:30:50
2002/11/04

Anna Langford was born in 1917 in Springfield, Ohio. Her father, Arthur J. Riggs Jr., died when she was nine months old. Her mother, Alice Riggs, was turned away from a white clinic when she was in labor, and died while in the ambulance on route to a hospital in Cincinnati. Afterwards, Langford was raised by her grandmother [Minnie Reed]. Her grandfather, Arthur J. Riggs, started a chapter of the Elks (IBPOEW), in Cincinnati. At five years old, Langford saw the Ku Klux Klan march down the main street of her town. When Langford was in the ninth grade, she moved to Chicago and attended Hyde Park High School. While in college, she worked several jobs such as at the Election Commissioner's office. During the eleven years it took for her to complete law school [John Marshall Law School] she married twice and had a son, Larry W. Langford Jr.

African American Families--Ohio--Springfield.

Race Relations—Ohio—1920-1930.

Segregation in Education—Ohio—Springfield.

Improved, Benevolent, Protective Order of Elks of the World.

Ku Klux Klan—Ohio—1920-1930.

Video Oral History Interview with Anna Langford, Section A2002_190_001_003, TRT: 0:30:08
2002/11/04

Anna Langford's high school ambition was to be a criminal lawyer. At the age of nineteen, she married one of the first African Americans in the navy. Her second marriage also ended in divorce. In 1956, Langford began her law practice in an office above a Chinese restaurant at 71st Street and South Park Avenue. In an early case, she represented a man who was accused of murder. In 1964, she investigated civil rights issues such as the case of Schwerner, Chaney, and Goodman, in Mississippi. Langford worked with the Mississippi Challenge and interviewed African Americans who were denied the right to vote. In 1967 in Chicago, Langford ran for the office of alderman but there was a controversy regarding the vote count in the 27th district. She ran again for the same office with a clear victory in 1971.

Divorce—United States.

African American lawyers—Chicago (Ill.).

Civil rights workers—Mississippi—1960-1970

Chaney, James Earl—1943-1964.

Schwerner, Michael Henry—1939-1964.

Goodman, Andrew—1943-1964.

Video Oral History Interview with Anna Langford, Section A2002_190_001_004, TRT: 0:18:32
2002/11/04

Anna Langford described her experiences during the Council Wars [1983-1986] and during the term of Mayor Harold Washington in 1991. She considered retiring, but after learning about a case of black women being harassed at work at the water reclamation department [Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago], she believed there was more work for her to do. Langford explained that she was the only person in her family left of her generation and discussed how she saw her legacy in terms of inspiring others to go into the field of law.

Washington, Harold, 1922-1987.

Discrimination in employment—Chicago (Ill.)

Sex discrimination in employment—Chicago (Ill.)
Criminal records—Expungement—Illinois.