

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Charles B. Rangel

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Rangel, Charles B.
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Charles B. Rangel,
<b>Dates:</b>	July 22, 2003 and October 22, 2018
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2003 and 2018
<b>Physical Description:</b>	7 Betacame SP videocassettes uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:31:24).
<b>Abstract:</b>	U.S. congressman The Honorable Charles B. Rangel (1930 - ) has represented the Fifteenth Congressional District of New York since 1971. Rangel was a founder of the Congressional Black Caucus and became the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee in 2007. Rangel was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 22, 2003 and October 22, 2018, in New York, New York and Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2003_201
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

New York Congressman and Harlem native Charlie Rangel was born in New York on June 11, 1930. Raised by his mother and maternal grandfather, a Pullman porter and elevator operator, Rangel grew up in the streets of New York. After dropping out of high school, Rangel served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War, where he was seriously wounded in battle and received the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

After his return from Korea and near-death experience, Rangel enrolled at New York University, earning a B.A. in 1957 and receiving his law degree from St. John's University Law School in 1960. In 1961, Attorney General Robert Kennedy appointed Rangel assistant U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York. In 1967, Rangel won election to the New York State Assembly. In 1971 Rangel ran for U.S. Congress and defeated the famous Reverend Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. in a historic election. Rangel's victory inaugurated the first of his seventeen consecutive terms as representative of the Fifteenth Congressional District of New York. This district contains the neighborhood of Harlem.

Rangel's tenure in Congress has been marked by a continued activism and concern for his constituency. Rangel was one of the founding members of the Congressional Black Caucus and served at one time as its chairman. He has also been active on issues of trade and human resources. In 1987, Rangel, one of the leading opponents to South African apartheid, pushed the Internal Revenue Service to eliminate tax credits for taxes paid to the apartheid government of South Africa. In 1995, he helped to create a federal "empowerment zone" in Manhattan and authored the low-income tax credit to stimulate the development of affordable housing in urban areas. Early in 2003, Rangel proposed the reinstatement of the military draft as a way to deter the use of force and promote a peaceful resolution to the standoff in Iraq. In 2007, Rangel became the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee.

Rangel and his wife, Alma, have two children, Steven and Alicia. The Rangels, active still in many civic and community organizations, maintain their home in Harlem.

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# Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Charles B. Rangel was conducted by Harriette Cole and Julieanna L. Richardson on July 22, 2003 and October 22, 2018, in New York, New York and Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes uncompressed MOV digital video files. U.S. congressman The Honorable Charles B. Rangel (1930 - ) has represented the Fifteenth Congressional District of New York since 1971. Rangel was a founder of the Congressional Black Caucus and became the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee in 2007.

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# 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®.

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# 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.

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# Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

## Persons:

Rangel, Charles B.

Cole, Harriette (Interviewer)

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Rangel, Charles B.--Interviews

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African American legislators--Interviews

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African American civic leaders--New York (State)--New York--Interviews

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African American lawyers--Interviews

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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New York

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## Occupations:

U.S. Congressman

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

PoliticalMakers

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## 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 Charles B. Rangel, July 22, 2003 and October 22, 2018. 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).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Charles B. Rangel, Section  
A2003\_201\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:35 ?

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel was born on June 11, 1930 in Harlem, New York City. His father, Ralph Rangel, who may have been Puerto Rican, moved to New York City from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Rangel had a limited relationship with his father. Rangel's maternal ancestors were enslaved in Accomack, Virginia. Rangel describes his relationship with his mother, Blanche Wharton, and grandfather, both of whom he lived with for most of his childhood. Rangel's grandfather was an elevator operator in the criminal court building in New York City, to which Rangel credits his desire to become a lawyer. Rangel talks about his older brother, Ralph, and younger sister, Frances. His brother enlisted in the U.S. Army seven years prior to Rangel. Rangel describes his closeness to his brother who died of kidney failure. In his sister's adult years, she became a nurse and mother. Rangel concludes by recounting anecdotes of his neighborhood's involvement in and support for his political career.

African American legislators--Interviews.

African American civic leaders--New York (State)--New York--Interviews.

African American lawyers--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Charles B. Rangel, Section  
A2003\_201\_001\_002, TRT: 0:31:00 ?

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel briefly lived in the Bronx, New York with his maternal uncle and his wife. During that time, he was the only black person in his classes at PS 89, as the rest of the neighborhood was Jewish. Rangel describes building a strong academic foundation in the two years that he lived in the Bronx prior to moving back to Harlem with his mother and maternal grandfather. Rangel reflects on growing up in Harlem and his love for the borough. Rangel describes himself as a mischievous youth. He was involved in gang activity but was also an altar boy in the Catholic Church. He was a runner for gamblers and held jobs at the local drugstore and hardware store. Rangel recalls his reputation attending public school in Harlem and tells stories of his interactions with police as a youth. Once, a man lured Rangel to his car by pretending to be a policeman. He also talks about his social club and his lifelong friends. In his late twenties, Rangel worked as a clerk at the Hotel Theresa in Harlem.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Charles B. Rangel, Section  
A2003\_201\_002\_003, TRT: 3:32:45 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Charles B. Rangel, Section  
A2003\_201\_002\_004, TRT: 4:31:36 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Charles B. Rangel, Section

A2003\_201\_002\_005, TRT: 5:30:42 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Charles B. Rangel, Section  
A2003\_201\_002\_006, TRT: 6:31:04 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Charles B. Rangel, Section  
A2003\_201\_002\_007, TRT: 7:23:42 ?