

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Dorothy Brown

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Brown, Dorothy, 1953-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Dorothy Brown,
Dates:	January 22, 2004 and October 8, 2003
Bulk Dates:	2003 and 2004
Physical Description:	8 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:33:50).
Abstract:	Clerk of the circuit court The Honorable Dorothy Brown (1953 -) is the Clerk of Cook County, Illinois, the largest circuit court in the world and has served as president of the National Women's Political Caucus of Greater Chicago. Brown was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 22, 2004 and October 8, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2003_251
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Attorney and certified public accountant Dorothy Brown grew up in a family of eight children and helped her family make ends meet as a young girl by picking cotton on the family farm. During high school, she continued to work, first as a housekeeper and later in a nutrition center for mothers on welfare. After high school, Brown attended Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where she earned her B.A. in 1975, and became a CPA two years later. In 1981, she earned an M.B.A. from DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois, and returned to school in the 1990s to earn a law degree from Chicago-Kent College of Law in 1996.

Beginning her career as a CPA, Brown worked for Commonwealth Edison and Arthur Anderson & Company. From there, she was hired by the First National Bank of Chicago and later left to join the firm of Odell Hicks and Company. One of her clients at Odell Hicks was the Chicago Transit Authority, and within a few years, she was the general auditor there. While working with the CTA, Brown ran for treasurer of the city of Chicago and narrowly lost the election. Trying again in 2000, Brown ran for the clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County and won. Brown still serves as clerk today for the largest circuit court in the world.

Brown has been active in a number of other areas throughout her professional career, having served as president of the National Women's Political Caucus of Greater Chicago and Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. She is also the founder and executive director of the Star Scholarship Fund. Her work, both civic and professional, has garnered her many awards, including the Women in History Excellence Award and the 1999 Women of the Year Award. Brown lives in Chicago, and has one daughter, Detris.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Dorothy Brown was conducted by Larry Crowe and Scott

Stearns on January 22, 2004 and October 8, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 8 Betacame SP videocassettes. Clerk of the circuit court The Honorable Dorothy Brown (1953 -) is the Clerk of Cook County, Illinois, the largest circuit court in the world and has served as president of the National Women's Political Caucus of Greater Chicago.

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:

Brown, Dorothy, 1953-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Brown, Dorothy, 1953- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Cook County (Ill.)

Occupations:

Clerk of the Circuit Court

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 Dorothy Brown, January 22, 2004 and October 8, 2003. 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 Dorothy Brown, Section A2003_251_001_001, TRT: 0:29:56 ?

County official Dorothy Brown describes her family background and her ancestors from rural Louisiana. Brown recalls spending time on her

grandparents' farm picking cotton. Brown also explains how the sacrifices of her parents enabled her and her siblings to lead fulfilling lives.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Dorothy Brown, Section A2003_251_001_002, TRT: 0:29:17 ?

County official Dorothy Brown discusses her childhood in Minden, Louisiana, describing her neighborhood, her schools, and her religious and athletic participation. Brown details the prejudice she faced at an all-white high school as part of an integration experiment, and explains how a move back to a black high school helped her to regain her confidence. Brown also talks about her success as a basketball player at Webster High School.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Dorothy Brown, Section A2003_251_001_003, TRT: 0:29:15 ?

County official Dorothy Brown describes her experience at Southern University in Baton Rouge and the beginning of her career as an accountant. Brown explains the factors that led her to switch her major at Southern from sociology to accounting, and then details her involvement in the 1972 student demonstrations at Southern. Brown talks about her difficulty in finding a job after graduating, despite her superior record, and explains her positions and responsibilities at her first two jobs at Commonwealth Edison and Arthur Andersen.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Dorothy Brown, Section A2003_251_001_004, TRT: 0:30:01 ?

County official Dorothy Brown discusses her successful career in accounting, describing her positions and responsibilities at companies such as First National Bank of Chicago, the Chicago Transit Authority, and Odell Hicks and Company. Brown explains how she overcame prejudice and advanced to top level positions. Brown then discusses her desire to run for public office, which led to her decision to earn a law degree.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Dorothy Brown, Section A2003_251_001_005, TRT: 0:29:53 ?

County official Dorothy Brown details her campaign for the office of City Treasurer of Chicago in 1999. Brown explains the various barriers she had to overcome to get her name on the ballot, discusses her campaign strategies, and analyzes the results of the election, which she lost. Brown also explains how this race pointed her toward her next campaign, for the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Dorothy Brown, Section A2003_251_001_006, TRT: 0:24:45 ?

County official Dorothy Brown discusses her campaign strategies in her run for Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County. Brown then cites her accomplishments during her time in office, talking about her emphasis on professionalism and improvement of technology. Brown then shares her hopes for the future of the black community, and considers her legacy, paying tribute to her parents and siblings for supporting her.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Dorothy Brown, Section A2003_251_002_007, TRT: 0:31:22 ?

The Honorable Dorothy Brown narrates her photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Dorothy Brown, Section A2003_251_002_008, TRT: 0:09:21 ?

The Honorable Dorothy Brown narrates her photographs.