

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr.

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Holder, Eric Himpton, 1951-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr.,
Dates:	December 17, 2004
Bulk Dates:	2004
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:05:12).
Abstract:	United states attorney and presidential appointee The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr. (1951 -) was the first African American U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia and the first African American Deputy Attorney General for the United States. In February of 2009, Holder was confirmed as the first African American U.S. Attorney General under the Obama Administration. Holder was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 17, 2004, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2004_266
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Eric Himpton Holder was born on January 21, 1951, in the Bronx, New York. His mother was a telephone operator and secretary and his father was in the real estate industry. In 1969, Holder earned his high school diploma and a Regents Scholarship from Stuyvesant High School.

Holder received his B.A. degree in American history in 1973 from Columbia University where he became active in civil rights. He graduated from Columbia Law School in 1976. While a law student, he clerked for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and the Department of Justice's Criminal Division in 1974 and 1975, respectively. The Department of Justice clerkship led to his first job after law school, when he worked as part of the attorney general's honors program in 1976. In this position, Holder prosecuted public officials accused of corruption, including the treasurer of the state of Florida, the ambassador to the Dominican Republic, a local judge in Pennsylvania and an assistant U.S. Attorney in New York.

In 1988, Holder was nominated by former President Ronald Reagan to become an associate judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. During his five years on the bench, he presided over hundreds of civil and criminal trials. In 1993, Holder was nominated by President Bill Clinton to serve as the U.S. attorney for Washington, D.C., becoming the first African American to serve in that position. During his four-year tenure, he created a domestic violence unit, implemented a community prosecution project, and developed Operation Cease-Fire, a program aimed at getting guns out of the hands of criminals.

In 1997, President Clinton appointed Holder as the first African American deputy attorney general, the number two position in the Justice Department. As deputy attorney general, Holder supervised all of the DOJ's litigating,

enforcement, and administrative components in both civil and criminal matters. He also created Lawyers for One America, a program designed to diversify the legal profession and increase pro bono work nationally.

In 2001, Holder joined the firm of Covington and Burling as a litigation partner handling civil and criminal cases, domestic and international advisory matters and internal corporate investigations. In February of 2009, Holder was confirmed as the first African American U.S. Attorney General under the Obama Administration.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr. was conducted by Racine Tucker Hamilton on December 17, 2004, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. United states attorney and presidential appointee The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr. (1951 -) was the first African American U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia and the first African American Deputy Attorney General for the United States. In February of 2009, Holder was confirmed as the first African American U.S. Attorney General under the Obama Administration.

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:

Holder, Eric Himpton, 1951-

Hamilton, Racine Tucker (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Holder, Eric Himpton, 1951---Interviews

Government attorneys--Washington (D.C.)--Interviews.

Attorneys general--United States--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

United States. Attorney (District of Columbia)

United States. Dept. of Justice.

Occupations:

United States Attorney

Presidential Appointee

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 The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr., December 17, 2004. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 6/7/2022 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 Eric H. Holder, Jr., Section
A2004_266_001_001, TRT: 0:30:50 2004/12/17

Former U.S. Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder describes his family background and his childhood in Queens, New York. His parents, both from Barbados, met in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Holder shares his father's stories of moving from the Caribbean to Harlem, New York. Holder and his younger brother, William Yearwood Holder, grew up in East Elmhurst, Queens, a neighborhood undergoing rapid changes in racial demographics. Holder describes the challenges he faced after he was sent to a school for the gifted.

African American families.

Childhood and youth--New York (State)--New York.

African American fathers.

African American neighborhoods--New York (State)--New York.

Brothers and sisters--New York (State)--New York.

African Americans--Education--New York (State)--New York.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr., Section
A2004_266_001_002, TRT: 0:30:27 2004/12/17

Former Deputy U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder describes his secondary and post-secondary school years in great detail. He reveals that he mainly concentrated on studying in high school, and had a limited social life. He grew socially and intellectually while at Columbia University. Holder earned legal internships at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and later with a prestigious program at the U.S. Department of Justice. Holder shares stories of his tenures there, detailing the inner workings and political atmosphere of the Department of Justice during the 1970s.

African Americans--Education, Secondary--New York (State)--New York.

Columbia University.

NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

United States. Department of Justice.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr., Section
A2004_266_001_003, TRT: 0:28:14 2004/12/17

Former Deputy U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder details his career on the bench and in the U.S. Department of Justice during the Clinton Administration. He describes his first cases where he was humbled in losing. Holder also shares stories of courtroom triumphs. After an appointment to the District of Columbia Circuit Court, Holder recalls his frustration at sentencing numerous young black males to prison. Finally, Holder details his experience as Deputy U.S. Attorney general. He explains how he worked to institute programs to alleviate some of

the disparities in sentencing, and trying to limit judicial oversight over that area. He also describes his brief time as Acting U.S. Attorney General.

United States. Department of Justice.

United States. Circuit Court (District of Columbia).

Sentences (Criminal procedure).

United States. Attorney-General.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr., Section
A2004_266_001_004, TRT: 0:27:41 2004/12/17

Former Deputy U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder describes working with Covington and Burling after leaving the Clinton administration. He reflects on Osama Bin Laden and the challenges of the Saddam Hussein trial. Holder also reflects on what he would still like to accomplish in his career, the milestones of his life, and then provides advice for those who are interested in a career in law. Lastly, Holder expresses his hopes and concerns for the African American community, and reflects on his legacy and how he would like to be remembered.

Covington & Burling.

Bin Laden, Osama, 1957-2011.

Hussein, Saddam, 1937-2006.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr., Section
A2004_266_001_005, TRT: 0:08:00 2004/12/17

Former Deputy U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder narrates his photographs.
Photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr., Section
A2004_266_Holder_Eric_06_MED_001, TRT: 1:00:00 1997/11/20

The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr.