

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Judith C. Rice

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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>	Rice, Judith C., 1957-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Judith C. Rice,
<b>Dates:</b>	July 18, 2005
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2005
<b>Physical Description:</b>	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:52:10).
<b>Abstract:</b>	City treasurer, city government appointee, and city commissioner The Honorable Judith C. Rice (1957 - ) was the first woman to serve as commissioner of the Chicago Department of Water and head of the Chicago Department of Transportation. Rice also served as City Treasurer for the City of Chicago under the administration of Mayor Richard M. Daley. Rice was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 18, 2005, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2005_165
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Former City Treasurer for the City of Chicago, Judith Carol Rice was born on July 30, 1957, in Chicago, Illinois. The granddaughter of sharecroppers and daughter of Thelma Dean Martin and Fred Rice, Chicago's first African American Police Superintendent, Rice attended Avalon Park Elementary School and Mercy High School. While attending high school, Rice was a member of the drama club and performed in the lead role for her high school's production of *Hello Dolly*. Rice

graduated from high school in 1975, and attended Northern Illinois University from 1975 to 1976. In 1977, Rice began attending Loyola University and graduated cum laude with her B.A. degree in communications in 1981.

In 1982, Rice was hired to work in the Cook County State's Attorney's Office. Rice rose from a Victim/Witness Assistant to Assistant to the Illinois State's Attorney. While working in the Illinois State's Attorney's Office, in 1984, Rice decided to further her education by attending John Marshall Law School. In 1988, Rice earned her J.D. degree and was admitted to the Illinois Bar. In 1989, Rice began her career with the City of Chicago serving as Assistant Corporation Counsel. Rice went on to become the city's managing Deputy Director and then Director of the Department of Revenue from 1993 to 1995. It was in these positions that Rice was instrumental in the complete overhaul of Chicago's parking ticket collection system. Also in 1995, Rice worked as a staff member for Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley.

Between 1996 and 2000, Rice became the first woman commissioner of two of the biggest infrastructure agencies in City of Chicago government; from 1996 to 1999, she served as Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Water, and from 1999 to 2000, she served as head of the Chicago Department of Transportation. In November of 2000, Rice was appointed by Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley as City Treasurer. As City Treasurer, Rice was responsible for all cash and investments for the City of Chicago.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Judith C. Rice was conducted by Larry Crowe on July 18, 2005, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. City treasurer, city government appointee, and city commissioner The Honorable Judith C. Rice (1957 - ) was the first woman to serve as commissioner of the Chicago Department of Water and head of the Chicago Department of Transportation. Rice also served as City Treasurer for the City of Chicago under the administration of Mayor Richard M. Daley.

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## Restrictions

### Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The

## 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:

Rice, Judith C., 1957-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Rice, Judith C., 1957---Interviews

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African American women civic leaders--Illinois--Chicago--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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Chicago (Ill.)

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Chicago Transit Authority

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Chicago (Ill.). Bureau of Water Operations

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## **Occupations:**

City Treasurer

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City Government Appointee

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City Commissioner

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

CivicMakers|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 Judith C. Rice, July 18, 2005. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

## Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 2/5/2020 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 Judith C. Rice,  
Section A2005\_165\_001\_001, TRT: 0:28:20 2005/07/18

The Honorable Judith C. Rice was born in 1957 in Chicago to Thelma Martin Rice and HistoryMaker Fred Rice, Jr. Her maternal grandmother was born in 1907 in rural Texas where she picked cotton for a white landowner. Her maternal grandfather was born in Shreveport, Louisiana and worked as a lumberjack. He relocated to Texas where he met Rice's grandmother at church. Rice's mother was born in 1926 in New Willard, Texas. When she applied for college, some schools, including HBCUs, rejected her because of her darker skin. She became a teacher and moved from Texas to Chicago, where she met Rice's father. Rice's paternal grandparents met in Alabama before they moved to Chicago, where her

father was born in 1926. He graduated from DuSable High School and Wilson Junior College and began his police career at the Chicago Park District Police Department. When the Chicago Police Department integrated, he advanced to patrolman and district commander. During Harold Washington's mayoralty, he was appointed superintendent.

African American women civic leaders--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews.

Local transit--Employees--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Judith C. Rice,  
Section A2005\_165\_001\_002, TRT: 0:28:20 2005/07/18

The Honorable Judith C. Rice grew up in Chicago's Avalon Park neighborhood where she attended Avalon Park Elementary School and her parents were active in community groups. She shared her mother's musical interests and inherited her father's outlook and mannerisms. Rice's parents discouraged her and her brother from watching television and insisted on regular family dinners, even when her father returned home late from work. Her parents converted to Catholicism so Rice could attend Chicago's Mercy High School. Although she was shy, Rice starred in the drama club's production of 'Hello, Dolly!' She attended Northern Illinois University in DeKalb from 1975 to 1976, before dropping out and returning home. Heeding her father's advice to return to school, she majored in corporate communications at Loyola University Chicago where she studied with Sammy Danna and Kay Felkins. After college, she worked as a victim witness assistant for the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, which inspired her interest in law.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Judith C. Rice,  
Section A2005\_165\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:00 2005/07/18

The Honorable Judith C. Rice attended John Marshall Law School in Chicago, Illinois. There, she participated in the Black Law Student Association and formed long-lasting friendships with other African American law students. After graduating from law school in 1988, she returned to the Cook County State's Attorney's Office where she worked first in narcotics, followed by criminal

appeals. Rice then began working for the City of Chicago in the corporation counsel's office, representing the city against slum landlords. She then joined the Department of Revenue where she helped enforce parking violations, which created a major source of city revenue. In the mid-1990s, she served as assistant to Mayor Richard M. Daley before being appointed water commissioner, rendering her the first woman to lead an infrastructure department in Chicago. Rice describes the U.S. criminal justice system, including Cook County's systemic prosecution of men of color. She also talks about Chicago's parking regulations.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Judith C. Rice,  
Section A2005\_165\_001\_004, TRT: 0:26:30 2005/07/18

The Honorable Judith C. Rice served as commissioner of water for the City of Chicago between 1996 until 1999. In that position, she helped modernize the city's water system. In 2000, she managed the city's Department of Transportation before being appointed city treasurer in 2000, filling the spot vacated by HistoryMaker Barbara Ann Lumpkin. She was then elected to the position in 2003. As city treasurer, she established and maintained relationships with the city's banks, in addition to working with brokers and the city's pension funds. With Chancellor of the City Colleges of Chicago HistoryMaker Wayne Watson, she established Our Money Matters, a financial literacy program. Rice reflects upon her work as city treasurer, running for political office and the ways in which law school benefitted her career in government. She describes her hopes for the African American community and her parents' support for her career. Rice reflects upon her life, legacy, and how she would like to be remembered.