

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Harold D. Melton

Overview of the Collection

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Repository: | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com |
| Creator: | Melton, Harold D., 1966- |
| Title: | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Harold D. Melton, |
| Dates: | February 17, 2006 |
| Bulk Dates: | 2006 |
| Physical Description: | 4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:53:50). |
| Abstract: | State supreme court judge The Honorable Harold D. Melton (1966 -) was appointed Chief Justice to the Georgia Supreme Court, and has also served in the capacities of Section Leader and Assistant to the Attorney General in the Office of the Governor, in the Tax Division for the state of Alabama and Consumer Interests Division in Georgia. Melton was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 17, 2006, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| Identification: | A2006_026 |
| Language: | The interview and records are in English. |

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Georgia Supreme Court Justice Harold David Melton is the son of Carole H. Melton of Atlanta, Georgia. His father and role model, Augustus A. Melton, Jr. of Washington, D.C. is the first Black person and one of two to manage the District of Columbia's National Airport (now Reagan International Airport).

Melton was born in Washington, D.C. on September 25, 1966. He was the younger of two boys. He grew up in the East Pointe and Marietta sections of Atlanta. In 1985, Melton attended Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama where he majored in international business and Spanish. During his second year at Auburn, he financed his tour of Peru, Bolivia and Brazil as a basketball player and Spanish interpreter for the school's basketball team. Melton was the first person of color elected to serve as president of the student senate at Auburn and was the second to run and win as an independent. In 1991, he earned his J.D. degree from Georgia State University in Athens, Georgia. Following graduation from law school, he accepted a position in the office of Alabama Governor Guy Hunt as Assistant Attorney General in the Fiscal Affairs Division. He was promoted to Senior Assistant Attorney General in 1997 and Section Leader in the Tax Division. In 1998, he was selected to serve as Assistant to the Governor for Youth Affairs.

From 1998 to 2003, Melton supervised an administrative staff and six lawyers in the Consumer Interests Section as Leader in the Georgia Department of Law in Atlanta. In January 2003, Melton was appointed Executive Counsel to the Honorable Sonny Perdue to represent the Governor on legal issues. At thirty-eight years of age on July 1, 2005, he was appointed to the Supreme Court of Georgia.

Melton is an active board member of Atlanta Youth Academies and serves as Youth Leader for Southwest Christian Fellowship Church. From 1991 to 2002, he was a Volunteer Leader for Young Life Ministries.

Melton resides in Atlanta with his wife, Kimberly and their three children.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Harold D. Melton was conducted by Evelyn Pounds on February 17, 2006, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. State supreme court judge The Honorable Harold D. Melton (1966 -) was appointed Chief Justice to the Georgia Supreme Court, and has also served in the capacities of Section Leader and Assistant to the Attorney General in the Office of the Governor, in the Tax Division for the state of Alabama and Consumer Interests Division in Georgia.

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:

Melton, Harold D., 1966-

Pounds, Evelyn (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Melton, Harold D., 1966- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Georgia

Occupations:

State Supreme Court Judge

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 Harold D. Melton, February 17, 2006. 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 Harold D. Melton, Section
A2006_026_001_001, TRT: 0:28:20 ?

The Honorable Harold D. Melton was born on September 25, 1966 in Washington, D.C. to Carole Melton and Augustus Melton, Jr. His maternal great-grandmother was born to a slave and slave owner in East Point, Georgia, and her home was burned down by the Ku Klux Klan when she was a child. His maternal grandfather served as a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army during World War II and the Korean War. Melton remembers his grandfather's funeral at Arlington National Cemetery. His mother was born in 1942 in Washington, D.C., where her family was involved with their church choir and Howard University's music department. Melton's father was born in New Bern, North Carolina and raised by Melton's paternal great-grandmother who was a teacher. His parents both attended and met at Howard University. His father served in the U.S. Air Force and worked at the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport. Melton remembers his childhood pastimes, his family's first home, and visiting his grandmother.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Harold D. Melton, Section A2006_026_001_002, TRT: 0:28:50 ?

The Honorable Harold D. Melton moved in 1972 to East Point, Georgia, where his maternal great-grandmother was born. He and his brother were among the first black students to attend St. Olive Elementary School, where the African American janitorial and lunchroom staff took great care of him. Melton had a chocolate allergy, and he remembers that he was always given a different dessert on the days the lunchroom served chocolate. He recalls the positive experiences he had with his friends as well as his family's holiday traditions. Melton's parents divorced shortly after coming to East Point, and Melton moved to Marietta, Georgia, where he attended East Cobb Middle School. Basketball played an influential role in Melton's adolescence, and he played throughout school. Melton also participated in cross country, and was a member of several honor societies at Wheeler High School. His mother attended Reverend Dr. Barbara L. King's church, while he attended Roswell Street Baptist Church.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Harold D. Melton, Section A2006_026_001_003, TRT: 0:28:00 ?

The Honorable Harold D. Melton remembers the atmosphere in East Point, Georgia during the Atlanta Missing and Murdered Children cases from 1979 to 1981. In Marietta, Georgia, Melton the first African American student to be elected by his classmates at Wheeler High School as Mr. Wheeler for his freshmen, junior and senior years. Melton attended Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama, where he was exposed to more intense racial discrimination than ever before. He reflects upon how his background prepared him to deal with those tensions. Despite this, Melton enjoyed his classes and professors, was a member of the Campus Crusade for Christ (Cru) and served as an aide in student government. He took part in a three week tour of South America playing basketball and running camps for the local youth with Cru's Athletes in Action ministry. He reflects upon the African American leaders who have paved the way for him, such as Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., and reflects upon what he would have done in their positions.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Harold D. Melton, Section A2006_026_001_004, TRT: 0:28:40 ?

The Honorable Harold D. Melton's uncle gave Melton his extra clarinet, which melton played in elementary and middle school. Melton hoped to play the trumpet, and he remembers his disappointment upon receiving the gift. He reflects upon the prevalence of drug use in his neighborhood of Marietta, Georgia, and how he avoided that culture. Melton received a full-ride

scholarship to study international business at Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama. While there, he travelled throughout South America with the Athletes In Action ministry. He also became the first African American student government president in Auburn University's history. To fund his campaign, Melton worked at Honey Baked Ham Company over the Christmas holidays, sawing hams. Melton's role as president was to oversee the budget and student life. He was involved in proposals to switch from a quarter to a semester system and to allocate funds for a swimming pool. Melton reflects upon his mentors and standardized testing in the U.S.