

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Marc H. Morial

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Morial, Marc H.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Marc H. Morial,
Dates:	April 4, 2006, March 21, 2006, May 2, 2006 and November 29, 2006
Bulk Dates:	2006
Physical Description:	10 Betacame SP videocassettes (4:26:15).
Abstract:	Nonprofit chief executive and mayor The Honorable Marc H. Morial (1958 -) served two terms as mayor of New Orleans, and was appointed president and CEO of the National Urban League in 2003. Morial was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 4, 2006, March 21, 2006, May 2, 2006 and November 29, 2006, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2006_045
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Chief executive officer and politician Marc Haydel Morial was born on January 3, 1958, in New Orleans, Louisiana. He is the son of Sybil Haydel Morial, a teacher and university administrator, and the late Ernest N. "Dutch" Morial, who was the first African American Mayor of New Orleans. Morial attended a Jesuit high school, receiving his diploma in 1976. He earned his B.A. degree in economics and African American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania in 1980 and received his J.D. degree from Georgetown University Law Center in 1983.

In 1992, Morial served two years in the Louisiana State Senate, where he was recognized as Legislative Rookie of the Year. Prior to his elected service, Morial worked as a private practice lawyer at Adams and Reese, one of the Gulf South's leading law firms. One of his most noteworthy U.S. Supreme Court cases - *Chisom v. Roemer* - established that the Voting Rights Act be applied to the election of judges. This led to the election of the first African American judge in Louisiana.

Morial served two terms as mayor of New Orleans from 1994 to 2002. Many improvements were made during his terms as mayor including crime reduction, police reform and the passing of a significant bond issue. In addition, during his last two years in office, Morial served as president of the United States Conference of Mayors. The Morials, father and son, have the distinction of being one of the first African American political dynasties.

In May 2003, Morial was appointed president and CEO of The National Urban League, a revered civil rights organization. Since that appointment, Morial's Empowerment Agenda has worked to reenergize the League's diverse constituencies; to build on the strength of its nearly one hundred year old legacy; and to increase its profile both locally and nationally.

Morial has been recognized by *Non-Profit Times* as one of America's top 50 non-profit executives, and was named one of the "100 Most Influential Blacks in America" by *Ebony* magazine. In June 2009, Morial was appointed chair of the 2010 Census Advisory Committee.

Morial is married to news anchor Michelle Miller and has two children.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Marc H. Morial was conducted by Shawn Wilson on April 4, 2006, March 21, 2006, May 2, 2006 and November 29, 2006, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 10 Betacame SP videocassettes. Nonprofit chief executive and mayor The Honorable Marc H. Morial (1958 -) served two terms as mayor of New Orleans, and was appointed president and CEO of the National Urban League in 2003.

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:

Morial, Marc H.

Wilson, Shawn (Interviewer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Morial, Marc H. --Interviews

African American mayors--Louisiana--New Orleans--Interviews

African American executives--Interviews

African American civil rights workers--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

National Urban League.

New Orleans (La.)

Occupations:

Nonprofit Chief Executive

Mayor

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers|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 Marc H. Morial, April 4, 2006, March 21, 2006, May 2, 2006 and November 29, 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 Marc H. Morial, Section A2006_045_001_001, TRT: 0:28:04 ?

The Honorable Marc H. Morial was born on January 3, 1958 in New Orleans, Louisiana to Sybil Haydel Morial and Ernest Morial. His maternal grandfather, C.C. Haydel, studied at Straight College and Howard University College of Medicine and was one of the most prominent doctors and civic activists in New Orleans. His maternal grandmother, Eudora Arnaud Haydel, was a teacher and domestic. Morial describes New Orleans' Creole community, and his paternal grandparents' part in it. His paternal grandfather, Walter Morial, was a cigar maker, and his grandmother, Leonie Moore Morial, was a seamstress. Morial's father was one of six children, and one of two who attended college. His parents met in Boston while his mother was attending Boston University. They moved to the New Orleans neighborhood of Pontchartrain Park, an African American subdivision. Morial remembers going to his father's office and assisting in his campaigns for the Louisiana legislature and his becoming New Orleans' first African American mayor.

African American mayors--Louisiana--New Orleans--Interviews.

African American executives--Interviews.

African American civil rights workers--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Marc H. Morial, Section A2006_045_001_002, TRT: 0:29:34 ?

The Honorable Marc H. Morial describes New Orleans' religious leaders, such as A.L. Davis and Reverend Avery C. Alexander. These men mentored Morial's father, Ernest Morial, and influenced him professionally. Morial's father became the first African American judge on the State of Louisiana Court of Appeal for the Fourth Circuit. Morial's mother, a teacher, founded the Louisiana League of Good Government and was involved in the United Teachers of New Orleans. Morial attended Hume Child Development Center and St. Gabriel the Archangel School, where he was one of three black students. After fourth grade, Morial attended Christian Brothers School. He was one of its first African American students but found support in his teachers. He remembers playing in neighborhood football leagues and on the all-star basketball team. Sports influenced Morial both in his childhood and his mayoral career. He also studied music, despite his disinterest. Morial and his siblings all pursued education through graduate school.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Marc H. Morial, Section A2006_045_002_003, TRT: 0:30:21 ?

The Honorable Marc H. Morial's father was elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives in 1967. He remembers his father's inauguration in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and visits to him in the capital. As a legislator, his father worked to remove racial labels from donated blood. Morial played football and basketball for his neighborhood of Pontchartrain Park in New Orleans. In the summers, he worked as a page for legislators such as William J. Guste, Louis

Charbonneau and Johnny Jackson. In 1970, Morial's father was appointed as a judge of the juvenile court and then elected to the state court of appeals in 1972. Morial passed out flyers to support the campaigns. He attended Jesuit High School in New Orleans and the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 1977, Morial's father ran for mayor of New Orleans against Joseph Derosa and won. During the campaign, Morial worked on signage. He describes the various wards of New Orleans, naming those that supported his and his father's campaigns.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Marc H. Morial, Section A2006_045_002_004, TRT: 0:28:16 ?

The Honorable Marc H. Morial reflects upon his upbringing and why his parents exposed him to many cultures. He attended Jesuit High School in New Orleans, Louisiana. To cope with the school's segregated culture, Morial and his fellow African American classmates established a black student union. The majority of Morial's social life took place outside of the school with his neighborhood friends, so he quickly learned how to operate within different environments and defend himself. Morial decided to enroll at the University of Pennsylvania rather than attend a historically black college like his parents. He pledged Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, was involved in the Black Student League and studied economics with the intention to become a lawyer. Morial enjoyed college despite experiencing racial discrimination. In 1979, New Orleans' police department went on strike during Mardi Gras. His father, the mayor, cancelled the festival and broke the power of the Police Association of New Orleans union.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Marc H. Morial, Section A2006_045_003_005, TRT: 0:29:29 ?

The Honorable Marc H. Morial applied to multiple Ivy League schools, but chose to attend the University of Pennsylvania because of its strong academics and location in Philadelphia. His parents encouraged him to leave Louisiana and to attend an elite college. Morial remembers his first day on campus and choosing his dorm room. He reflects upon the racial diversity at the University of Pennsylvania, and describes its African American community. Morial pledged Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity; was a member of the Black Student League; and founded the United Minorities Council. He remembers the college's African American student leaders as his mentors. During his junior year, Morial worked as a legal assistant for Senator Russell B. Long in Washington, D.C., where he met Ronald Dellums and Andrew Young. He describes meetings of the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance, remembering how few African Americans were part of the legislature.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Marc H. Morial, Section A2006_045_003_006, TRT: 0:22:43 ?

The Honorable Marc H. Morial remembers the professors at the University of Pennsylvania who influenced him, including Ernest Wilson III and A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr., and first hearing Reverend Jesse L. Jackson speak in 1974. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1980 and enrolled at Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, D.C. Upon earning his J.D. degree in 1983, he returned to New Orleans. He and his father worked for Reverend Jackson's 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns in Louisiana. He describes the campaigns and their impact on the Democratic party. Morial's father was mayor of New Orleans at the time, and Morial describes the new convention centers, industry and special events that his father brought to the city. Morial joined the Barham and Churchill law firm staff as a civil litigator. He

studied Mack Barham's work, as well as that of other powerful local businessmen and politicians. While at the firm, Morial also started a business producing T-shirts and specialty items.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Marc H. Morial, Section A2006_045_004_007, TRT: 0:30:22 ?

The Honorable Marc H. Morial started his own business while working at Barham and Churchill. One of Morial's greatest successes at Barham and Churchill was the State of Louisiana v. Lonnie J. Shropshire, Jr., which made police records public in Louisiana. He won the case in the Louisiana Supreme Court in 1985. That year, Morial left Barham and Churchill and went into private practice. His clients included Dollar Rent A Car and V. Keeler and Company, Inc. At this time, the number of African American lawyers and judiciaries in New Orleans was growing. Morial recalls that, upon his graduation from Georgetown University, Revius Oliver Oritque, Jr. was the sole African American trial judge in Louisiana. Morial was involved with such organizations as the American Civil Liberties Union of Louisiana and the Boys and Girls Club. He ran for U.S. Congress in 1991 but lost to William Jefferson. The next year, he rallied voters against Louisiana politician David Duke and was elected to the Louisiana State Senate.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Marc H. Morial, Section A2006_045_004_008, TRT: 0:29:38 ?

The Honorable Marc H. Morial reflects upon David Duke's negative impact on Louisiana. Morial served in the Louisiana State Senate for two years. In that time he was awarded the Legislative Rookie of the Year and Education Senator of the Year, and served as vice chair of the Environmental Quality Committee. In 1993, Morial was elected mayor of New Orleans, Louisiana. His campaign ran on the need for public safety, jobs and housing reform. Morial reflects upon his political ideology and his work for reform. One of his first pieces of legislation as mayor was a public safety package that included a curfew for minors, summer camps, and a transfer of two hundred police officers from City Hall to the streets. Morial reflects upon his successes and regrets as mayor, and the similarity of his terms to his fathers'. During Hurricane Georges, Morial became the first mayor to evacuate the New Orleans. Morial describes how he ensured public safety, and reflects upon the failure to do so during Hurricane Katrina.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Marc H. Morial, Section A2006_045_004_009, TRT: 0:29:34 ?

The Honorable Marc H. Morial's first ran for mayor of New Orleans against Donald Mintz, a prominent lawyer and civic activist whose campaign was found to have violated Louisiana law by distributing anonymous defamatory flyers. Morial remarks upon issues of racial discrimination in New Orleans elections. His second term in office saw the completion of many projects he began in his first term, including the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, Jazzland theme park and the return of the New Orleans Hornets basketball team. Morial served as president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, where he worked with Norman Rice, Wellington Webb and Willie L. Brown. After leaving office, he joined the law firm of Adams and Reese LLP. After one year, the National Urban League requested to interview him. He remembers travelling to New York City to meet the search committee and learning of his appointment as president. Morial reflects upon the challenges of the presidency, and how it differed from his mayoralty.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Marc H. Morial, Section A2006_045_004_010,

TRT: 0:08:14 ?

The Honorable Marc H. Morial reflects upon his life and describes his hopes for the African American community. Morial concludes the interview by describing his three children and his marriage to his wife, journalist Michelle Miller.