

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Valerie Jarrett

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Jarrett, Valerie
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Valerie Jarrett,
Dates:	December 13, 2006
Bulk Dates:	2006
Physical Description:	5 Betacam SP videocassettes (2:00:49).
Abstract:	Real estate lawyer, city government appointee, and presidential advisor Valerie Jarrett (1956 -) served as president of the Habitat Company and a former chairman of both the Chicago Transit Authority and the Chicago Stock Exchange. She is Senior Advisor to President Barack Obama, and Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs and Public Liaison. Jarrett was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 13, 2006, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2006_165
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Lawyer, businessperson, and civic leader Valerie Bowman Jarrett was born Valerie Bowman, November 14, 1956, in Shiraz, Iran to education expert Barbara Bowman and Dr. James Bowman, a pathologist and pioneering geneticist. Her maternal grandfather was Chicago housing legend, Robert Taylor. Moving from Iran to London, Jarrett attended Tetherdown Elementary School. Returning to the United States, she attended Shaesmith University of Chicago Lab School and graduated from Northfield Mount Hermon School in Massachusetts in 1974. Jarrett received her B.A. degree in psychology from Stanford University in 1978 and obtained her J.D. degree from the University of Michigan Law School in 1981.

Beginning her career as a corporate banking associate at Chicago's Pope, Ballard, Shepherd, and Fowle, Jarrett then joined the real estate department of Sonnenschein, Carlin Nath and Rosenthal. In 1987, she was tapped to serve as deputy corporation counsel for finance and development for the City of Chicago under Mayor Harold Washington and continued service under Mayor Eugene Sawyer and Mayor Richard M. Daley. From 1988 to 1989, Jarrett also served as director of Leadership Greater Chicago. In 1991, she served as Mayor Daley's deputy chief of staff. Jarrett was appointed Chicago's commissioner of planning and development where she consolidated three departments and was awarded the Women's Business Development Center's Government Support Award. In 1995, Mayor Daley appointed her as chairman of the Chicago Transit Authority where she served for eight years and was responsible for a budget of over \$800 million. That same year, Jarrett was appointed Vice President of the Habitat Company. In 2003, Jarrett was elected to a three-year term as chairman of the Chicago Stock Exchange. In 2007, Jarrett was named president of the Habitat Company.

A longtime advisor of President Barack Obama, Jarrett served as co-chairperson of the Obama-Biden Presidential Transition Team. She is Senior Advisor and Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs and Public

Liaison.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Valerie Jarrett was conducted by Crowe, Larry on December 13, 2006, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 5 Betacam SP videocassettes. Real estate lawyer, city government appointee, and presidential advisor Valerie Jarrett (1956 -) served as president of the Habitat Company and a former chairman of both the Chicago Transit Authority and the Chicago Stock Exchange. She is Senior Advisor to President Barack Obama, and Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs and Public Liaison.

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:

Valerie Jarrett

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Valerie Jarrett--Interviews

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

African American women lawyers--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews

African American women executives--Illinois--Chicago--Interviews

Presidents--United States--Staff--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Chicago

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 Valerie Jarrett, December 13, 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 7/9/2012 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, December 13, 2006

Video Oral History Interview with Valerie Jarrett, Section A2006_165_001_001, TRT: 0:29:01
2006/12/13

Valerie Bowman Jarrett slates her interview and lists her favorites. Jarrett was born from American parents James and Barbara Bowman in Iran in 1956. She is descended from activist and Chicago Housing Authority board member Robert Rochon Taylor and architect Robert Robinson Taylor. Both sides of her family valued civic engagement and community improvement. Jarrett's experiences abroad and culture shock in Chicago shaped her personality to one of self-sufficiency and humanity for all persons. She enrolled in Stanford intending to major in anthropology but switched to psychology.

African American physicians.

Family--History.

Video Oral History Interview with Valerie Jarrett, Section A2006_165_001_002, TRT: 0:28:54
2006/12/13

Valerie Bowman Jarrett's transition to Chicago was made easier by an instructor at the Chicago Laboratory School and the protection of her parents. Although she had a sense of national politics, she had no civic knowledge. At Stanford she intended to major in anthropology but aimlessly switched concentrations until settling on psychology. She enrolled in law school at the University of Michigan and was fascinated by tax law dictating or affected by public policy. She joined Mayor Harold Washington's staff in 1987 and transitioned through to the Richard Daley administration where she was appointed his Deputy Chief of Staff in 1991.

Washington, Harold, 1922-1987.

Stanford University--Alumni and alumnae.

University of Michigan. Law school--Alumni and alumnae.

Video Oral History Interview with Valerie Jarrett, Section A2006_165_001_003, TRT: 0:29:37
2006/12/13

Valerie Bowman Jarrett recalls the environment of the mayor's office following Harold Washington's death and its transition, as well as her role, as Deputy Chief of Staff in the Richard M. Daley administration. In 1991 she headed the new, consolidated Department of Planning and Development but left in 1995 over public disputes with other Daley staff. She worked for The Habitat Company, a Chicago Housing Authority receiver and neighborhood developer that focused on holistic community building. Jarrett believes community input is crucial in the redevelopment process and ultimately creates a better, albeit delayed, result.

City planners--Illinois--Chicago.

City planning—20th century.

Civic improvement--20th century.

Daley, Richard M.

Washington, Harold, 1922-1987.

Video Oral History Interview with Valerie Jarrett, Section A2006_165_001_004, TRT: 0:26:52
2006/12/13

Jarrett's appointment as the chair of the Chicago Transit Board was seen as a

political move. She made the CTA customer rather than rider focused to improve its image and ridership. In her position as co-owner of The Habitat Company she oversaw the development of many redevelopment projects throughout Chicago and served on the boards of many Chicago-based private and civic organizations including the Chicago Stock Exchange, Federal Reserve Bank, and the University of Chicago Medical Center. She believes her race and sex allowed her to lower critics' expectations and shatter them by succeeding. Jarrett believes disincentives built in to some public policy of the 1960s contributed to the current state of black poverty and male incarceration. Jarrett believes she will leave the world a better place and that her daughter is her greatest legacy.

City planning—20th century.

Civic improvement--20th century.

Mass transit--Illinois--Chicago.

Mass transit--Social aspects.

Daley, Richard M.

Obama, Barack

Video Oral History Interview with Valerie Jarrett, Section A2006_165_001_005, TRT: 0:06:25
2006/12/13