

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Paul Webber

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Webber, Paul R.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Paul Webber,
Dates:	February 6, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:01:22).
Abstract:	Superior court judge The Honorable Paul Webber (1934 -) was a senior judge of the Washington, D.C. Superior Court. Webber was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 6, 2007, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_049
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Senior judge in the District of Columbia Superior Court, Paul Rainey Webber, III was born on January 24, 1934 in Gadsden, South Carolina to Paul Rainey Webber, Jr. and Clemmie Embley Webber. His parents, both educators, met at South Carolina State University. Webber's mother is the author of *My Treadwell Street Saga* and *The College Soda Shop – An Education for Life*, chronicling the business. Webber attended Felton Elementary School, the South Carolina State College Lab School and graduated from Wilkinson High School in 1951. He earned his B.A. degree in political science in 1955 from South Carolina State College and his J.D. degree from South Carolina State College's School of Law in 1957.

Webber practiced law in Columbia, South Carolina for nineteen months and taught at Allen University. He was married in 1958 before leaving for UCLA where he was employed as assistant law librarian in 1959. In 1960, he joined Golden State Mutual Insurance Company as associate legal counsel. Webber was appointed trial attorney for the Antitrust Division of the United States Justice Department in 1964. In 1967, he becomes managing attorney for the Neighborhood Legal Services Program, serving during the 1968 riots. Webber became a partner with Thompson Evans Dolphin and Webber in 1969, which later became Dolphin Branton Stafford and Webber. In Washington, Webber taught at Howard University School of Communications and later at George Washington University School of Law. Webber was appointed Washington, D.C. Superior Court Judge in 1977. In 1985, he was named “Outstanding Trial Judge of the Year” and was rated “One of the Best Trial Justices in the Washington Metropolitan Area” by *Washington Magazine* in 1996. Webber ascended to Senior Judge of the D.C. Superior Court in 1998 and was inducted into the National Bar Association Hall of Fame that same year.

Webber is a member of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies Think Tank, the Council for Court Excellence, and the Guardsmen. He serves as board member and general counsel for the Boule, Sigma Pi Phi and is also the author of *Enjoy the Journey, One Lawyer's Memoir*.

Webber is married to Fay DeShields Webber and has three grown children.

Webber was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on February 6, 2007.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Paul Webber was conducted by Larry Crowe on February 6, 2007, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Superior court judge The Honorable Paul Webber (1934 -) was a senior judge of the Washington, D.C. Superior Court.

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®.

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:

Webber, Paul R.

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Webber, Paul R.--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

District of Columbia. Superior Court

Occupations:

Superior 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 Paul Webber, February 6, 2007. 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).

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 Paul Webber, Section A2007_049_001_001, TRT: 0:29:40 2007/02/06

The Honorable Paul Webber was born on January 24, 1934 in Gadsden, South Carolina to Clemmie Embly Webber and Paul Webber, Jr. His maternal great-grandfather, July Embly, was a Civil War veteran. In Orangeburg, South Carolina, his maternal grandfather, Henry Embly, Sr., attended the Colored Normal Industrial Agricultural and Mechanical College of South Carolina, while his maternal grandmother, Colin Robinson Embly, attended Claflin University. Both became educators, and lived on Orangeburg's Treadwell Street. His paternal grandparents, Carrie Webber and Paul Webber, Sr., owned farmland and several general stores near Columbia, South Carolina. Webber's parents met in Orangeburg at the Colored Normal Industrial Agricultural and Mechanical College of South Carolina, and became professors there. They also owned the College Soda Shop and an apartment building. Webber attended Orangeburg's Felton Laboratory School; played saxophone; and was influenced to attend church by Benjamin Mays, an Orangeburg native.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Paul Webber, Section A2007_049_001_002, TRT: 0:29:45 2007/02/06

The Honorable Paul Webber attended the segregated Wilkinson High School in Orangeburg, South Carolina, where students used white students' secondhand books and buses. He graduated in 1951, and enrolled at Orangeburg's South Carolina State College. There, he was inspired by his political science professor, Lewis K.

McMillan, who emphasized African American history. During college, he joined the Reserve Officers' Training Corps and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, and was the business manager of his class. From 1954, Webber attended South Carolina State College School of Law. Many of his professors represented civil rights activists, and shared their defense arguments in class. Upon graduating, Webber opened a law practice in Columbia, South Carolina, where he also taught business law at Allen University. In 1959, he moved his family to California to become an assistant law librarian at the University of California Los Angeles School of Law. Webber also describes the history of Orangeburg's Civil Rights Movement.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Paul Webber, Section A2007_049_001_003, TRT: 0:30:44 2007/02/06

The Honorable Paul Webber left his law librarian assistantship for a highly compensated legal position at Golden State Mutual Life Insurance Company in Los Angeles, California. After passing the California bar exam, he opened a law practice. He also befriended Leo Branton, Jr., who later defended Angela Davis. In 1964, he moved to Washington, D.C. to work for the U.S. Department of Justice Antitrust Division, and specialized in antitrust violations in the film industry. At this time, Thurgood Marshall recommended him for admission to the Bar of the United States Supreme Court. From 1967, Webber managed the Neighborhood Legal Services Program, which represented low income clients. In 1969, he became an associate at the firm of Thompson, Evans and Dolphin, where he practiced with civil rights lawyer Wiley A. Branton, Sr. At the recommendation of attorney Willie Leftwich, Webber was appointed as a judge of the District of Columbia Superior Court in 1977, and became the presiding judge of the Civil Division.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Paul Webber, Section A2007_049_001_004, TRT: 0:31:13 2007/02/06

The Honorable Paul Webber was nominated to the District of Columbia Superior Court as a judge in 1977. In the 1980s, when drug use was increasing in Washington, D.C., he sought alternatives to incarceration, such as

rehabilitation programs. The Trial Lawyers Association of Metropolitan Washington, D.C. named Webber the outstanding trial judge of the year in 1986. He describes his judicial philosophy, and the reforms he hopes to see in the criminal justice system, particularly for juvenile offenders. Webber cofounded the Judicial Council of Washington Bar Association with Judge Arthur L. Burnett, Sr. He also served as general counsel to Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity. Webber reflects upon his life and legacy; his hopes for the African American community; and how he would like to be remembered. He concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.