

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Karen Hastie Williams

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Williams, Karen Hastie, 1944-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Karen Hastie Williams,
Dates:	April 27, 2007
Bulk Dates:	2007
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:05:40).
Abstract:	Corporate lawyer Karen Hastie Williams (1944 - 2021) was the former director of Washington Gas, and was the first African American to join the law firm Crowell & Moring, LLP, and be made partner. Williams was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 27, 2007, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2007_167
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Karen Hastie Williams was born on September 30, 1944 in Washington, D.C. to Beryl and William H. Hastie, Jr. Her father was the first African American federal judge appointed to the bench of the Federal District Court in the U.S. Virgin Islands and became the first African American Governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1946. In 1949, he was appointed to the Third United States Circuit Court of Appeals, where he would serve for twenty-one years. Judge William H. Hastie along with Charles Hamilton Houston, Thurgood Marshall, and others worked on the cases that led to the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.

Williams graduated from Girls' High School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She received her B.A. degree from Bates College in 1966 and her M.A. degree from Tufts University in 1967. In 1973, she received her J.D. degree from Catholic University of America. She was then hired as a law clerk for Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall and Judge Spottswood W. Robinson, III of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

Williams served as Chief Counsel of the Senate Committee on the Budget from 1977 until 1980. She also served as Administrator of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy. In 1982, she was the first African American to joined Crowell & Moring LLP, where she made partner in two years. As a retired partner, she has taken on a new area of expertise, seeking compensation for victims of terrorism.

From 1992 to 1993, Williams served as Chair of the ABA Section of Public Contract Law and became Director of Washington Gas & Light. Williams was appointed by President George W. Bush and served with distinction as a Public Life Member of the Internal Revenue Oversight Board from 2000 to 2003 and was Chair of the Red Cross Governance Advisory Committee.

Williams is a member of the National Contract Management Association, the Black Women Lawyers Association, the National Bar Association and the Women's Forum of Washington, D.C. Her community activities include

service on the Board of Directors of the Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights under the Law. She is a member of the Board of Trustees for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund at Amherst College and formerly of the National Cathedral School.

Williams was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 27, 2007.

Williams passed away on July 7, 2021.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Karen Hastie Williams was conducted by Denise Gines on April 27, 2007, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Corporate lawyer Karen Hastie Williams (1944 - 2021) was the former director of Washington Gas, and was the first African American to join the law firm Crowell & Moring, LLP, and be made partner.

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:

Williams, Karen Hastie, 1944-

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Williams, Karen Hastie, 1944- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Corporate Lawyer

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 Karen Hastie Williams, April 27, 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 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 Karen Hastie Williams, Section A2007_167_001_001, TRT: 0:28:40 ?

Karen Hastie Williams was born on September 30, 1944 in Washington, D.C. to Beryl Lockhart Hastie and William H. Hastie. In the U.S. Virgin Islands, Hastie Williams' maternal great-grandfather, Alfred Lockhart, was born a slave on St. Croix, and became a businessman and landowner on St. Thomas. He bequeathed his business to Hastie Williams' maternal grandparents, Katherine Ingeborg Lockhart and Herbert Lockhart, Sr. Her paternal grandparents, schoolteacher Robert Childs Hastie and pharmacist William H. Hastie, Sr., raised Hastie Williams' father in Washington, D.C. He went on to attend Amherst College in Amherst, Maine, and Harvard Law School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he became the second African American member of the Harvard Law Review. In 1937, her father was appointed the district court judge of the U.S. Virgin Islands, where he met Hastie Williams' mother after speaking at her high school commencement. They later became reacquainted while living in Washington, D.C.

Video Oral History Interview with Karen Hastie Williams, Section A2007_167_001_002, TRT: 0:29:00 ?

Karen Hastie Williams' father, William H. Hastie, served from 1937 as a district court judge in the U.S. Virgin Islands. There, he met Hastie Williams' mother, who was in high school at the time. Hastie Williams' father returned to Washington, D.C. to serve as the law school dean at Howard University, and reconnected with her mother after she enrolled there. Hastie Williams was born in Washington, D.C., and moved to St. Thomas in 1946, when her father became the governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands. There, she attended the Saints Peter and Paul Catholic School. In 1949, she moved with her family to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where her father served on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. He worked on civil rights cases alongside attorneys Spottswood W. Robinson III and Thurgood Marshall, the latter of whom was Hastie Williams' godfather. In Philadelphia, Hastie Williams attended Ellwood Elementary School, General Louis Wagner Junior High School and the Philadelphia High School for Girls.

Video Oral History Interview with Karen Hastie Williams, Section A2007_167_001_003, TRT: 0:28:30 ?

Karen Hastie Williams grew up in the predominantly Jewish neighborhood of East Oak Lane in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She attended the Philadelphia High School for Girls, where she was involved in athletics, and joined the newspaper and yearbook staff. Upon graduation, Hastie Williams matriculated at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, where she majored in political science. During her junior year, she studied at the University of Neuchatel in Switzerland, and wrote her thesis on federalism in Switzerland and the United States. She then earned a master's degree in international relations at The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in Medford, Massachusetts. While in Medford, Hastie Williams met Wesley S. Williams, Jr. through a mutual friend. They married in 1968, and had two children. Hastie Williams briefly worked at the Mobil Oil Corporation in New York City, before moving to Washington, D.C., where she earned her J.D. degree at the Columbus School of Law.

Video Oral History Interview with Karen Hastie Williams, Section A2007_167_001_004, TRT: 0:28:40 ?

Karen Hastie Williams obtained her J.D. degree in 1973 at the Columbus School of Law in Washington, D.C. She then became a clerk for Judge Spottswood William Robinson III, who was serving on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the

District of Columbia Circuit. After one year, she moved to the U.S. Supreme Court to clerk for her godfather, Thurgood Marshall, who was the court's first African American justice. After her second clerkship, Hastie Williams joined the law firm of Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver and Jacobson LLP in Washington, D.C., and then served as general counsel to the U.S. Senate Committee on the Budget. She went on to become the head of the Office of Federal Procurement Policy in the Office of Management and Budget of the executive branch. Hastie Williams left that position in 1981, and became a partner at Crowell and Moring LLP in Washington, D.C. In addition, she served on the several charitable boards, including the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. and the American Red Cross.

Video Oral History Interview with Karen Hastie Williams, Section A2007_167_001_005, TRT: 0:10:50 ?

Karen Hastie Williams was a partner at the corporate law firm of Crowell and Moring LLP in Washington, D.C., where she worked on several cases involving terrorism and compensation for former hostages. The firm represented journalist Terry A. Anderson, who was captured in Iran; and the family of one of the American citizens killed in the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Kenya in 1998. These cases led to the passage of legislation to provide compensation to victims of terrorism. In addition to her career in corporate law, Hastie Williams served under philanthropist Bonnie McElveen-Hunter on the American Red Cross' governance reform commission, which developed legislation to amend the organization's charter and restructure its leadership. Williams concludes the interview by reflecting upon her life, and her message to future generations.