

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Freddie Pitcher

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Pitcher, Freddie, 1945-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Freddie Pitcher,
Dates:	March 24, 2008
Bulk Dates:	2008
Physical Description:	4 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:59:51).
Abstract:	Law professor, state appellate court judge, and lawyer The Honorable Freddie Pitcher (1945 -) was the first African American City Court Judge in the history of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He served on the Louisiana First Circuit Court of Appeals, authoring close to 200 judicial opinions. Pitcher was also chancellor of Southern University Law Center. Pitcher was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 24, 2008, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2008_058
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Former Judge Freddie Pitcher, Jr. was born on April 28, 1945, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He graduated from McKinley High School in 1962 and earned his B.A. degree in political science from Southern University in 1966. He then received his J.D. degree from Southern University in 1973.

After completing his law degree, Pitcher established the law firm of Pitcher, Tyson

Avery, and Cunningham. In 1983, he was elected city-wide as the first African American City Court Judge in the history of Baton Rouge. Four years later, in 1987, he ran a successful city-wide election for the 19th Judicial District. He was the first African American elected to this position. In 1992, he ran unopposed for the Louisiana First Circuit Court of Appeals. Pitcher authored close to 200 judicial opinions while serving on the Louisiana First Circuit Court of Appeals. He has taught as an adjunct professor of law at both Southern University and Louisiana State University. He became a partner in the international law firm of Phelps Dunbar in 1997. His practice focused on the areas of commercial, casualty and employment litigation, and he was also a member of the firm's appellate practice group. Since 2003, Pitcher has been a full professor and Chancellor of Southern University Law Center in Baton Rouge. Pitcher has worked as a special counsel in the Office of the Attorney General for the State of Louisiana and as an assistant district attorney for East Baton Rouge Parish. He also held the position of associate justice ad hoc on the Louisiana Supreme Court.

Pitcher is a member of the Board of Directors of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, Baton Rouge Recreation Commission Foundation, Woman's Hospital Founders and Friends Endowment, Our Lady of the Lake College, Young Leaders Academy of Baton Rouge and Omega Psi Phi and Sigma Pi Phi fraternities. He is the recipient of numerous honors and awards including the G. Leon Netterville Award for Outstanding Achievement in Law from Southern University, the Distinguished Alumnus Award from both the Political Science Department and Law Center at Southern University, "Citizen of the Year" by Omega Psi Phi Fraternity (Lambda Alpha Chapter) and the Outstanding Achievement Award in the Legal Profession from the Louis A. Martinet Society.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Freddie Pitcher was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 24, 2008, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and was recorded on 4 Betacame SP videocassettes. Law professor, state appellate court judge, and lawyer The Honorable Freddie Pitcher (1945 -) was the first African American City Court Judge in the history of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He served on the Louisiana First Circuit Court of Appeals, authoring close to 200 judicial opinions. Pitcher was also chancellor of Southern University Law Center.

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:

Pitcher, Freddie, 1945-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Pitcher, Freddie, 1945---Interviews

African American judges--Interviews

African American lawyers--Interviews

African American law teachers--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Southern University Law Center

Louisiana

Occupations:

Law Professor

State Appellate Court Judge

Lawyer

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers|LawMakers|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 Freddie Pitcher, March 24, 2008. 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 Freddie Pitcher,
Section A2008_058_001_001, TRT: 0:29:40 2008/03/24

The Honorable Freddie Pitcher was born on April 28, 1945 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana to Lucy Angrum Pitcher and Freddie Pitcher, Sr. Pitcher's paternal grandfather was raised on a plantation in St. Francisville, Louisiana, where Pitcher's father was born in 1919. Their family later moved to a rural area of Baton Rouge, before settling in the Valley Park neighborhood. Pitcher's mother was born in St. Francisville in 1924. Her mother passed away when she young, and she had eleven siblings, some of whom relocated to New York. Pitcher's parents initially met in St. Francisville, and reconnected in Baton Rouge at the

Greater Sixty-Aid Baptist Church, where Pitcher's uncle, W.M. Pitcher, was the pastor. In Baton Rouge, Pitcher's father became one of the Standard Oil Company's first African American employees to receive first-class pay, while Pitcher's mother studied cosmetology at the J.M. Frazier Vocational-Technical School, and then operated a hairdressing business in their home.

African American judges--Interviews.

African American lawyers--Interviews.

African American law teachers--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Freddie Pitcher,
Section A2008_058_001_002, TRT: 0:31:00 2008/03/24

The Honorable Freddie Pitcher's father, Freddie Pitcher, Sr., worked for the Standard Oil Company in Baton Rouge, Louisiana for forty-three years. He developed alcoholism during that time, and struggled with the disease until his death. Pitcher grew up in Baton Rouge's Valley Park, a middle class community, and often visited his relatives in New Orleans, Louisiana. Pitcher began his education at Perkins Road Elementary School; and, after a semester, transferred to the newly constructed Valley Park Elementary School. He frequented the Valley Park community center, which was built on a reclaimed landfill. Pitcher aspired to a law career from an early age, and was influenced by his cousin, Alex Pitcher, who was one of the first African American graduates of the Southern University Law School in Baton Rouge. In the late 1950s, Pitcher's cousin was targeted for his activism, and moved to San Francisco, California, where he served as president of the local NAACP chapter.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Freddie Pitcher,
Section A2008_058_001_003, TRT: 0:28:40 2008/03/24

The Honorable Freddie Pitcher attended the segregated McKinley Senior High School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. There, he played guard linebacker on the football team, and acted in school plays. During his senior year, he was nearly expelled for fighting another student, but was pardoned because of his good academic standing. Pitcher enrolled at Southern University in Baton Rouge in 1962, during the presidency of Felton G. Clark. At the time, the

campus was tense due to the sit-ins of 1960, which had ended in the student demonstrators' expulsion. Pitcher initially majored in architecture, but switched to political science because of his interest in law. In his junior year, Pitcher was admitted to the Community Progress Incorporated summer program at Yale University. There, he lived in the Ezra Stiles College residence, and worked at the New Haven City Plan Commission. In Baton Rouge, Pitcher belonged to the Phalanx Fraternity, where his brothers included activist H. Rap Brown.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Freddie Pitcher,
Section A2008_058_001_004, TRT: 0:30:31 2008/03/24

The Honorable Freddie Pitcher was inspired to pursue a career in civil rights law while a student at McKinley Senior High School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, partly due to the influence of his cousin, attorney Alex Pitcher. Upon graduating from Southern University in Baton Rouge, Pitcher worked for Community Advancement Incorporated, a federal anti-poverty agency in Baton Rouge. In 1966, Pitcher was drafted, and began his U.S. Army basic training at Fort Polk, Louisiana, where he was once absent without official leave. Then, at Fort Gordon, Georgia, Pitcher served as a personnel specialist on the Third Army POR team, where he helped prepare servicemen for overseas travel. In 1969, he delisted to pursue his graduate studies at Louisiana State University, but decided to attend Southern University Law School instead. In 1973, Pitcher founded the law firm of Pitcher and Tyson in Baton Rouge with his partner, Ralph E. Tyson. He also explains the difference between civil law and common law.