

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Revius Oliver Ortique, Jr.

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Ortique, Revius Oliver, Jr., 1924-2008
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Revius Oliver Ortique, Jr.,
Dates:	March 24, 2008
Bulk Dates:	2008
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:09:50).
Abstract:	State supreme court judge The Honorable Revius Oliver Ortique, Jr. (1924 - 2008) was a former National Bar Association president. He was also the first African American justice appointed to the Louisiana Supreme Court. Ortique 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_059
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Justice Revius Oliver Ortique, Jr. was born on June 14, 1924, in New Orleans, Louisiana. A veteran of World War II, Ortique earned his B.A. degree in sociology from Dillard University in 1947 and his M.A. degree from Indiana University in 1949. Ortique then earned his J.D. degree from Southern University Law School in 1956. Ortique began his own private law practice in 1956, working on any type of case but focusing primarily on estate cases. His practice became one of the largest estate practices in the State of Louisiana. As the President of the Community Relations Council, Ortique served as “chief negotiator” for the peaceful desegregation of lunch counters, hotels and other public facilities in New Orleans. He served as the president of the National Bar Association from 1965 to 1967 and President Lyndon Johnson named Ortique to the Federal Hospital Council in 1966. In 1970, in the wake of killings by national guardsmen at Kent State University and Jackson State University, President Richard Nixon asked Ortique to serve on the President’s Commission on Campus Unrest. In 1974, President Nixon appointed Ortique to serve on the newly created Legal Services Corporation, a private, non-profit corporation established by the U.S. Congress to seek to ensure equal access to the criminal justice system by providing civil legal assistance to those who were unable to afford it. That same year, the Louisiana Supreme Court appointed Ortique as a judge pro tempore of Orleans Parish Civil District Court. In 1979, the citizens of New Orleans elected him Judge of the Orleans Parish Civil District Court. Ortique was later elected Chief Judge of the Orleans Parish Civil District Court by his fellow jurists.

Over the years, his work with the Louisiana State Bar Association’s Legal Aid Committee provided a model for pro bono legal work. Ortique was elected to sit on the bench of the Louisiana Supreme Court in 1992. He retired from that position in 1994. In addition, Ortique served as the president of the New Orleans Urban League and was named an alternate to the United Nations General Assembly by President Clinton in 1999. Ortique passed away on June 22, 2008 at the age of 84.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Revius Oliver Ortique, Jr. was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 24, 2008, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. State supreme court judge The Honorable Revius Oliver Ortique, Jr. (1924 - 2008) was a former National Bar Association president. He was also the first African American justice appointed to the Louisiana Supreme Court.

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:

Ortique, Revius Oliver, Jr., 1924-2008

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Ortique, Revius Oliver, Jr., 1924-2008 --Interviews

African American judges--Interviews

African American civil rights workers--Interviews

African American lawyers--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Louisiana

Occupations:

State Supreme 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 Revious Oliver Ortique, Jr., 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 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 Revius Oliver Ortique, Jr., Section A2008_059_001_001, TRT: 0:27:40 ?

The Honorable Revius Oliver Ortique, Jr. narrates his photographs. African American judges--Interviews. African American civil rights workers--Interviews. African American lawyers--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Revius Oliver Ortique, Jr., Section A2008_059_001_002, TRT: 0:29:10 ?

The Honorable Revius Oliver Ortique, Jr. was born on June 14, 1924 in New Orleans, Louisiana to Lillie Long Ortique and Revius Oliver Ortique, Sr. His maternal grandfather, Lung Yoke, came from Canton, China to New Orleans, where he first owned a laundry business on Bourbon Street, and later a restaurant in the French Quarter. Ortique's grandmother, who was African American, managed the restaurant while his grandfather returned to China to raise additional funds, but they ultimately lost the business. Ortique's paternal grandfather, whose ancestors came from Haiti, was a pipe layer in New Orleans. The pipe laying trade was rarely practiced by African Americans, and he faced discrimination from employers who refused to pay him equal to his white peers. Around the turn of the 20th century, Ortique's father was born in New Roads, Louisiana, and his mother was born near New Orleans. There, Ortique grew up on St. Louis Street in a home owned by his father, who taught Ortique to be proud of his Creole identity.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Revius Oliver Ortique, Jr., Section A2008_059_001_003, TRT: 0:31:50 ?

The Honorable Revius Oliver Ortique, Jr. grew up in the 9th Ward of New Orleans, Louisiana, where his parents taught him to befriend the children of other working class families. When Ortique was in the fourth grade, his elementary school moved to a new building, and was renamed Johnson C. Lockett Elementary School. There, he and his Creole classmates had more privileges than their black peers. He went on to attend the public, all-black Albert Wicker High School, where he excelled at debate and oratory, and won multiple state championships under the mentorship of Coach Walter J. Barker. In his senior year, Ortique transferred to Gaudet High School, an Episcopalian school with greater college scholarship opportunities. He briefly attended Xavier University of Louisiana, and then transferred to the drama department at Dillard University. Ortique was drafted into the U.S. Army during World War II, and served as an officer in the Philippines. He was a first lieutenant when he delisted in 1947.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Revius Oliver Ortique, Jr., Section A2008_059_001_004, TRT: 0:31:40 ?

The Honorable Revius Oliver Ortique, Jr. met his wife, Miriam Victorienne Ortique, at Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans. Upon the advice of Professor George W. Snowden at Dillard University, he used funds from the Servicemen's Readjustment Act to earn a master's degree at Indiana University in Bloomington. Then, in 1956, Ortique graduated from Southern University Law School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and opened a private civil law practice in New Orleans, where his peers included African American attorneys Robert Collins and A.P. Tureaud. In the 1960s, Ortique was president of the National Urban League; served on President Lyndon Baines Johnson's Federal Hospital Council; and represented Crown Zellerbach Corporation's black union in a

discrimination lawsuit. As president of the National Bar Association, he was part of the negotiations that led to Thurgood Marshall's appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1992, Ortique became the first African American to serve on the Louisiana Supreme Court.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Revius Oliver Ortique, Jr., Section A2008_059_001_005, TRT: 0:09:30 ?

The Honorable Revius Oliver Ortique, Jr. was the first African American justice appointed to the Louisiana Supreme Court, where he served from 1992 until his retirement in 1994. In 1999, President Bill Clinton named Ortique as an alternate representative to the United Nations General Assembly. Ortique and his wife, Miriam Victorianne Ortique, had one daughter, Rhesa Ortique McDonald, and three grandchildren. He reflects upon his life, legacy and how he would like to be remembered. Ortique also shares his support for Barack Obama, who, at the time of the interview, was a candidate for the presidency of the United States.