

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with A. Scott Bolden

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Bolden, A. Scott, 1962-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with A. Scott Bolden,
Dates:	July 25, 2008 and September 10, 2012
Bulk Dates:	2008 and 2012
Physical Description:	8 Betacame SP videocassettes uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:55:23).
Abstract:	Litigator A. Scott Bolden (1962 -) was office managing partner of the law firm, Reed Smith, in Washington, D.C. He also represented numerous Clinton presidential appointees as witnesses in congressional and federal investigations. Bolden was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 25, 2008 and September 10, 2012, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2008_093
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Lawyer and law partner, A. Scott Bolden was born Alan Scott Bolden on June 8, 1962 in Joliet, Illinois. Growing up watching his father try criminal and civil rights cases, he acquired exceptional oratorical skills, and knew that he would grow up to be a lawyer. In 1984, Bolden graduated cum laude from Morehouse College, where he received his B.A. degree in political science. Three years later, 1987, Bolden received his J.D. degree from the Howard University School of Law. While at Howard, Bolden was an active contributor to the *Howard Law Journal*, received a number of awards and scholarships and participated in the National Moot Court Team and Board of Phi Alpha Delta Legal Fraternity.

After graduating, Bolden would work as a law clerk for Judge Luke Moore of the District of Columbia Superior Court, a lead counsel in numerous trials for the New York County District Attorney's Office, and eventually become office managing partner of Reed Smith's Washington, D.C. office. Aside from successfully representing many developers and building owners in major real estate tax appeal litigations as a civil/commercial litigator, Bolden has had numerous accomplishments as a criminal defense litigator including representing numerous Clinton presidential appointees as witnesses in congressional and federal investigations. Bolden has been affiliated with the D.C. Chamber of Commerce, Economic Club of Washington, D.C., Individual Development Corporation and the Democratic National Committee. Aside from acting as a practicing attorney, Bolden has appeared on CNN's *Both Sides*, ABC's *20/20*, hosted WAMU, WTOP and WOL radio programs and served as co-host on "Building Bridges for Business."

Bolden lives in Washington, D.C, and has three daughters and one granddaughter.

Bolden was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on July 25, 2008.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with A. Scott Bolden was conducted by Larry Crowe on July 25, 2008 and September 10, 2012, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 8 Betacame SP videocassettes uncompressed MOV digital video files. Litigator A. Scott Bolden (1962 -) was office managing partner of the law firm, Reed Smith, in Washington, D.C. He also represented numerous Clinton presidential appointees as witnesses in congressional and federal investigations.

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:

Bolden, A. Scott, 1962-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Bolden, A. Scott, 1962- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Litigator

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 A. Scott Bolden, July 25, 2008 and September 10, 2012. 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 A. Scott Bolden, Section A2008_093_001_001, TRT: 0:29:00 ?

A. Scott Bolden was born on June 6, 1962 in Joliet, Illinois. His mother, Ina Kathleen Bolden, was born January 20, 1937 in Newton, Mississippi. Her mother, Thelma Trammel, passed away before Bolden's birth. Bolden's mother's family migrated north to Joliet when she was a girl. She had several

brothers and sisters, and Bolden spent a significant amount of time with his aunts and uncles as a child. His mother attended Lewis University in Romeoville, Illinois where she earned her M.A. degree in African and African American Studies. After graduation, she worked as a college administrator. Bolden's father, Raymond Allen Bolden, was born on December 17, 1933 in Chicago, Illinois and grew up poor; his mother was raised in Chicago and his father was from Cleveland, Ohio. Bolden's father met Bolden's mother during his time in the U.S. Air Force. He worked as a criminal lawyer, and attended the University of Illinois College of Law in Champaign, Illinois where he was one of the first African American graduates.

Video Oral History Interview with A. Scott Bolden, Section A2008_093_001_002, TRT: 0:28:00 ?

A. Scott Bolden talks about his father, Raymond Allen Bolden, who overcame challenges like homelessness to lead a successful career as a lawyer and head the NAACP in Will County, Illinois. As a boy, Bolden joined his parents in picketing to desegregate several public facilities in Joliet, Illinois. He comments on the lack of professional African American families in Joliet at the time other than Ferdinand Range, a funeral director. The civil rights activism of Bolden's parents played a formative role in his own political and professional development. He describes his parents' personalities as well as his relationships with his two siblings, Joey Bolden and Kathryn Marie Bolden. Bolden also recalls the time he lost a tooth to his sister. He has fond memories of family fish fries every Friday night, and of playing basketball and ping pong at the local YMCA. Bolden describes the entrance of gang activity in Joliet, and the city's changing cultural demographics in the late 1970s.

Video Oral History Interview with A. Scott Bolden, Section A2008_093_001_003, TRT: 0:29:00 ?

A. Scott Bolden talks about his elementary school and high school experiences, and how his background has influenced his career choice. Bolden attended the Sacred Heart Catholic Elementary School in Joliet, Illinois until 1976. He describes having nurturing teachers, a snowball fight where he almost lost an eye, and being bullied. Bolden went on to attend He Providence High School in New Lenox, Illinois from 1976 to 1980 where he was one of a few black students and had several negative racist experiences. He talks about the influence of black history and culture at home, and what it was like growing up with politically involved parents. He remembers the race riots in Joliet, Illinois in 1968 after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and receiving threatening phone calls to his home from the FBI.

Video Oral History Interview with A. Scott Bolden, Section A2008_093_001_004, TRT: 0:29:50 ?

A. Scott Bolden talks about playing sports at Providence High School in New Lenox, Illinois, and his determination to attend a historically black college. In 1980, Bolden enrolled at Morehouse College where he became a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, volunteered for the Congressional Black Caucus, and met U.S. Congressman and HistoryMaker Parren Mitchell and Dr. Benjamin Mays; Bolden also interned with HistoryMaker Julian Bond. Bolden recalls the influence of Robert Brisbane, Hamid Taqi, and Hugh Gloster at Morehouse. Bolden was present for HistoryMaker Reverend Jesse Jackson's announcement of his presidential candidacy in 1984 at King's Chapel on the Morehouse campus. After graduating with his B.A. degree in political science in 1984, Bolden entered Howard University School of Law in Washington, D.C. Bolden talks about his law school studies and Howard President, HistoryMaker H. Patrick Swygert. He also describes his father's influence on his decision to practice law.

Video Oral History Interview with A. Scott Bolden, Section A2008_093_002_005, TRT: 5:30:40 ?

A. Scott Bolden talks about his last years at Howard Law School in Washington D.C., and working in the New York District Attorney's office. Bolden drafted a case note for the Howard Law Journal that was published in 1985. Bolden's note was based on the 1985 'Tennessee vs. Garner' U.S. Supreme Court decision that ruled police action against an unarmed and fleeing felon illegal. Bolden talks about the Howard Law School's legacy as an iconic civil rights institution. He describes being taught by renowned faculty like William H. Bryant, who was the first black federal district court judge in Washington D.C. He describes competing on Howard's national moot court team, and the relationship he developed with Washington D.C. Judge Luke C. Moore. Bolden graduated in 1987 and went to work in the New York District Attorney's office until 1991. He recalls notorious New York County City criminal cases like the 1987 Tawana Brawley allegations and the Central Park "wildling" case in 1989.

Video Oral History Interview with A. Scott Bolden, Section A2008_093_002_006, TRT: 6:32:50 ?

A. Scott Bolden talks about his formative experiences as a lead counsel for the New York County District Attorney's Office from 1987 to 1991. In 1991, Bolden joined the Committee on the Judiciary for the County of the District of Columbia where he worked for D.C. councilmember Wilhelmina Rolark. That same year, Bolden became a litigator at the law firm of Reed Smith LLP in 1991. Bolden describes his experience at the firm including the pro bono representation of elected officials like HistoryMakers Marion Barry and Sharon Pratt. He also became interested in political fundraising. Bolden talks about his work as a defense lawyer. His clients include the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, members of the Clinton Administration, professional football player Albert Haynesworth, and Carlos Allen, the alleged third party crasher at a White House state dinner in November 2009. Bolden also talks about his work on a media libel case.

Video Oral History Interview with A. Scott Bolden, Section A2008_093_002_007, TRT: 7:29:58 ?

A. Scott Bolden defended Diane Gustus in a 2008 Washington D.C. tax theft scandal masterminded by Harriette Walters. Of the eleven defendants, Gustus was the only one the government did not prosecute. In 2009, Bolden represented Carlos Allen against charges of crashing a White House state dinner. Bolden describes his civic involvement in the D.C. Chamber of Commerce and the Recreation Wish List Committee. In 2001, Bolden chaired the Committee's construction of the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center in Southeast, Washington, D.C. and represented the Committee after Mayor Adrian Fenty's administration filed to have the group evicted from the Center in 2009. Civil rights legend and HistoryMaker Dorothy Height was present at the Center's hearing, which Bolden remembers as the highlight of his career. Bolden also talks about Fenty's bid for reelection, his own legal philosophy, his responsibilities as managing partner at Reed Smith LLP, and his professional commendations.

Video Oral History Interview with A. Scott Bolden, Section A2008_093_002_008, TRT: 8:26:05 ?

A. Scott Bolden reflects upon his reputation as a lawyer and on his failures. He was married in 1988 and divorced in 2001 with two children resulting from his marriage, McKay and McKenzie Bolden. In 2006, Bolden ran for Washington D.C. City Council; he describes how devastating the loss was for him. Shortly after the election, Bolden learned he had a nineteen-year-old daughter, Shayla, from a previous relationship, and briefly left Reed Smith LLP. He wrote an article for the Washington Post about the experience called, 'Becoming Shayla's Father.' Bolden returned to Reed Smith in 2007, and was promoted to managing partner in 2008. Bolden also talks about his relationship with his parents as well

as his membership in a black professional organization called The Family led by HistoryMaker Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner. He talks about his legacy, how he would like to be remembered, and provides his advice for aspiring lawyers.