

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Gloria Travis Tanner

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Tanner, Gloria Travis, 1934-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Gloria Travis Tanner,
Dates:	November 6, 2008
Bulk Dates:	2008
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:13:14).
Abstract:	State senator The Honorable Gloria Travis Tanner (1934 -) was the first African American woman to serve as a Colorado state senator. She was also elected as a member of the Colorado State House of Representatives for District 7 in 1985, and served as the House Minority Caucus leader from 1987 through 1990. She was the second African American to be elected to a leadership position in the Colorado House of Representatives. Tanner was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 6, 2008, in Denver, Colorado. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2008_131
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Former Colorado state senator Gloria Travis Tanner was born on July 16, 1934, in Atlanta, Georgia, to Blanche Arnold Travis and Marcellus Travis. Tanner received her B.A. degree in political science and graduated magna cum laude from Metro State College in 1974. She received her M.A. degree in urban affairs from the University of Colorado in 1976. In addition, Tanner graduated from the American

Management Association Program for Women in Top Managerial Positions and the Women in Leadership Program at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Tanner worked as an administrative assistant for the Office of Hearings and Appeals at the United States Department of the Interior from 1967 to 1972. She worked as a reporter and feature writer for the *Denver Weekly News*, one of the leading African American newspapers in the Denver area, from 1972 through 1976. From 1976 to 1978, Tanner was the executive assistant to Colorado lieutenant governor George L. Brown, one of the first black lieutenant governors since Reconstruction. She then worked for Senator Regis Groff as the executive director of his communications office. Tanner was elected as a member of the Colorado State House of Representatives for District 7 in 1985 and served as the House Minority Caucus leader from 1987 through 1990. She was the second African American to be elected to a leadership position in the Colorado House of Representatives. In 1994, Tanner was appointed to the Colorado State Senate to replace Regis Groff who resigned to take a position elsewhere. She was the first African American woman to serve as a Colorado state senator, and held the seat until the year 2000. During her seventeen years in public service, she initiated and sponsored legislation on key issues such as marital discrimination in the workplace, parental responsibility, worker's compensation cost savings, civil rights for women and minorities, and parental rights for adoptive parents.

Tanner is a widow and has three children: Terrance Ralph, Tanvis Renee, and Tracey Lynne.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Gloria Travis Tanner was conducted by Denise Gines on November 6, 2008, in Denver, Colorado, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. State senator The Honorable Gloria Travis Tanner (1934 -) was the first African American woman to serve as a Colorado state senator. She was also elected as a member of the Colorado State House of Representatives for District 7 in 1985, and served as the House Minority Caucus leader from 1987 through 1990. She was the second African American to be elected to a leadership position in the Colorado House of Representatives.

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:

Tanner, Gloria Travis, 1934-

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Tanner, Gloria Travis, 1934---Interviews

African American state legislators--Colorado--Interviews

African American women legislators--Colorado--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Colorado. General Assembly. Senate

Occupations:

State Senator

HistoryMakers® Category:

PoliticalMakers

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 Gloria Travis Tanner, November 6, 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 Gloria Travis Tanner, Section A2008_131_001_001, TRT: 0:28:44 2008/11/06

The Honorable Gloria Travis Tanner was born on July 16, 1934 in Atlanta, Georgia to Blanche Arnold Travis and Marcellus Travis, Sr. Her paternal grandmother died when her father was six years old, and he was raised in Atlanta by his aunt, Hattie Mosley. Travis Tanner's mother was born in Maxeys, Georgia to fourteen year old domestic Sophrina Arnold and her white employer, Tom Brightwell. She was sent to live with a relative in Florida, and later moved to Atlanta, where she met Travis Tanner's father, who was a graduate of Booker T. Washington High School. Travis Tanner's father became a cook and welder, while her mother worked at the Atlanta Biltmore Hotel and raised six children, including Travis Tanner, in the Old Fourth Ward. Travis Tanner studied at the Gray Street School, and then David T. Howard High School, where her classmates included Maynard Jackson, A.D. King and Vernon E. Jordan, Jr. She was active with the Girl Scouts, and attended Big Bethel A.M.E. Church with her paternal relatives.

African American state legislators--Colorado--Interviews.

African American women legislators--Colorado--
Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Gloria Travis Tanner,
Section A2008_131_001_002, TRT: 0:28:57 2008/11/06

The Honorable Gloria Travis Tanner grew up near Auburn Avenue in Atlanta, Georgia. She attended David T. Howard High School, where she played basketball and was active in the student government. Unable to afford college, she decided to join the U.S. Air Force; and, while stationed in Houston, Texas, met Theodore Tanner. After being discharged, he attended the Hampton Institute in Virginia, while Travis Tanner studied at Atlanta's Grady Memorial Hospital School of Nursing. They married in 1955, and her husband reenlisted in the U.S. Air Force. He was stationed in Wichita Falls, Texas before being transferred to Denver, Colorado, where Travis Tanner worked at the General Rose Memorial Hospital, and then as a public administrator at the state and federal levels. She earned an undergraduate degree at Denver's Metropolitan State College in 1974, and a master's degree at the University of Colorado in 1976. She also had three children, Terrence Tanner, Tanbis Tanner and Tracey Tanner.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Gloria Travis Tanner,
Section A2008_131_001_003, TRT: 0:28:36 2008/11/06

The Honorable Gloria Travis Tanner spent her early life in segregated Atlanta, Georgia, where she participated in the Civil Rights Movement. She later moved to Denver, Colorado, where she worked in the real estate industry before becoming the assistant to Lieutenant Governor George L. Brown, and then the manager of Regis Groff's campaign for the Colorado Senate. Travis Tanner ran her first campaign for the Colorado House of Representatives in 1982. That year, her husband, Theodore Tanner, passed away, and she lost to Arie Parks Taylor. In 1984, Travis Tanner was elected to the Colorado House of Representatives. She passed legislation to protect abandoned infants, and secured funding to preserve the historic black settlement of Dearfield, Colorado. When Senator Groff resigned in 1993, she was appointed to fill

his position, and was elected to a second senate term in 1994. Travis Tanner was active with organizations like NOBEL Women, and created the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Gloria Travis Tanner, Section A2008_131_001_004, TRT: 0:30:21 2008/11/06

The Honorable Gloria Travis Tanner served in the Colorado Senate from 1993 to 2001. She belonged to the Democratic Party, which was the minority party at the time; and joined the Joint Budget Committee, which gave her more control over state funding. She also frequently co-sponsored legislation. In 2008, Travis Tanner assisted with the organization of the Democratic National Convention in Denver, where she served as a host for the visiting delegates. In addition to her legislative work, she taught a leadership training program for black women interested in politics in New Jersey and Washington, D.C. Travis Tanner talks about her support for President Barack Obama, and remembers meeting Nelson Mandela. She also describes her plans for the future, and her hopes for the African American community, including black women in politics. She shares her advice for aspiring politicians, and reflects upon her life, legacy and how she would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Gloria Travis Tanner, Section A2008_131_001_005, TRT: 0:16:36 2008/11/06

The Honorable Gloria Travis Tanner reflects upon her life, including her political accomplishments and the obstacles she faced during her career. She concludes the interview by narrating her photographs.