

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Michael B. Coleman

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Coleman, Michael B., 1954-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Michael B. Coleman,
Dates:	April 4, 2012
Bulk Dates:	2012
Physical Description:	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:26:55).
Abstract:	Mayor The Honorable Michael B. Coleman (1954 -) became the first African American mayor of Columbus, Ohio in 2000, and spearheaded the redevelopment of downtown Columbus. Coleman was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 4, 2012, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2012_100
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

City of Columbus, Ohio Mayor Michael B. Coleman was born on November 18, 1954 in Indianapolis, Indiana to John H. Coleman, a physician, and Joan Coleman, a criminal victim's activist. Coleman's family moved when he was three years old to Toledo, Ohio where his first jobs were working at the corner drug store, Kroger's supermarket and his father's barbeque restaurant. He attended St. John's Jesuit High School in Toledo, Ohio and then went on to receive his B.A. degree in political science from the University of Cincinnati in 1977. Coleman obtained his J.D. degree from the University of Dayton School of Law in 1980.

After completing his law degree, Coleman began his career as an attorney in the Ohio attorney general's office. In 1982, he was hired as a legislative aide for then Columbus City Councilman, Ben Epsy. Coleman joined the Schottenstein Law Firm in 1984 and became a member of the Columbus City Council in 1992. He served as president of the city council from 1997 to 1999. In 1998, Coleman was the gubernatorial running mate to Democrat Lee Fisher, but they lost to Republicans Bob Taft and Maureen O'Connor in the closest gubernatorial election in Ohio in twenty-eight years. In 1999, he won a highly contested race to become the 52nd mayor of Columbus, Ohio and the first African American to hold the post. As mayor, Coleman spearheaded the Columbus Downtown Business Plan and Neighborhood Pride, a program designed to engage communities to revitalize their neighborhoods. He also created the after-school program, Capital Kids, in 2001 and the Green Spot program in 2006, to encourage Columbus residents and businesses to protect the environment. Coleman has leveraged incentives to create and retain more than 92,000 jobs in the Columbus area. He was re-elected to the office of mayor in 2003, 2007 and 2011.

Coleman has been recognized many times for his commitment to the Columbus community including receiving the Community Service Award from the Columbus Bar Association and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's (MORPC's) Sustainability Award. He is an honorary member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity.

Coleman has three adult children, Kimberly, Justin and John.

Michael B. Coleman was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 4, 2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Michael B. Coleman was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 4, 2012, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Mayor The Honorable Michael B. Coleman (1954 -) became the first African American mayor of Columbus, Ohio in 2000, and spearheaded the redevelopment of downtown Columbus.

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:

Coleman, Michael B., 1954-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Coleman, Michael B., 1954- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Mayor

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 Michael B. Coleman, April 4, 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 The Honorable Michael B. Coleman, Section
A2012_100_001_001, TRT: 1:29:23 ?

The Honorable Michael B. Coleman was born on November 18, 1954 in Indianapolis, Indiana to Joan Hughes Coleman and John Coleman. His paternal

great-grandmother, Margaret Dean, was born into slavery in Virginia and sold to a plantation in Kentucky. She was emancipated after the Civil War, and died at 102 years old. Her son, Coleman's paternal grandfather Bennett Coleman, worked as a police dog trainer and handyman in Madison, Indiana. There, he married Coleman's paternal grandmother, Cleo Shelton Coleman, who was a maid at the Madison Hotel. Coleman's mother was raised by his maternal grandmother, Rose Hughes, in Gary, Indiana. His parents met while studying at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. After they graduated, his father earned a medical degree from the Indiana University School of Medicine in Indianapolis. He then joined the U.S. Army, where he reached the rank of captain. Coleman's father eventually left the service and settled with his family in Indianapolis.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Michael B. Coleman, Section A2012_100_001_002, TRT: 2:29:17 ?

The Honorable Michael B. Coleman's father, John Coleman, completed his medical training at a hospital in Indianapolis, Indiana. While there, he also served as a medical consultant at the Indianapolis 500 in Speedway, Indiana. Then, Coleman's father joined the U.S. Army as a military physician. During his service, Coleman's family moved to El Paso, Texas, where his brother, Jeffrey Coleman, was born. After his father left the U.S. Army, Coleman's family settled in Toledo, Ohio, and his mother gave birth to his sister, Linda Coleman, and youngest brother, David Coleman. In Toledo, Coleman's father joined a private medical practice in the predominantly African American neighborhood of Roosevelt, and his family moved into a home located across the alley from the medical office. Coleman began his education at the all-black Lincoln Elementary School. Upon reaching the fourth grade, he and his siblings transferred to St. Angela Hall, an integrated Catholic school.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Michael B. Coleman, Section A2012_100_001_003, TRT: 3:29:10 ?

The Honorable Michael B. Coleman grew up during the 1960s in Toledo, Ohio. There, his father, John Coleman, cofounded the Cordelia Martin Community Health Center, which offered low cost medical services to the city's poor residents. During the Civil Rights Movement, Coleman saw Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. speak at Toledo's Jesup Wakeman Scott High School, and watched the television broadcast of the March on Washington. He also witnessed the civil unrest in Toledo after Dr. King's assassination in 1968. After graduating from St. Angela Hall, Coleman attended middle school at the Maumee Valley Country Day School. However, he disliked the wealthy white environment, and decided to transfer to St. John's Jesuit High School. While there, Coleman worked after class at a grocery store and his father's barbecue restaurant. He also played on the football team, and was under consideration for college athletic scholarships until he suffered a knee injury during his senior year.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Michael B. Coleman, Section A2012_100_001_004, TRT: 4:28:27 ?

The Honorable Michael B. Coleman enrolled at St. John's Jesuit High School in Toledo, Ohio during the late 1960s. Around this time, Carl Stokes was elected mayor of Cleveland, Ohio, and became the first black mayor of a major American city. In 1972, Ted Berry became the first African American mayor of Cincinnati, Ohio. Upon graduating from high school, Coleman enrolled at the University of Cincinnati in Cincinnati, Ohio, where he majored in political science and minored in history. He was a member of the Black Student Union,

and wrote for The News Record student newspaper. During the summers, Coleman worked for the Upward Bound program, where he helped high school students prepare for college. He applied for a summer position at a Republican politician's office, but was rejected due to his race and clothing, and decided to join the Democratic Party in response. After passing the LSAT, Coleman was admitted into the University of Dayton School of Law in Dayton, Ohio.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Michael B. Coleman, Section A2012_100_001_005, TRT: 5:28:43 ?

The Honorable Michael B. Coleman served as a summer aide to Judge Alice McCullum and Judge Richard Austin while attending the University of Dayton School of Law. Upon graduating in 1980, Coleman worked as a legal intern at the White House. There, he was tasked with planning a celebration for the U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Patricia Roberts Harris, and met such notable figures as U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. With help from Congressman C.J. McLin, Coleman secured a position in the antitrust division of the State of Ohio Office of the Attorney General. However, he disliked the work, and transferred to William J. Brown's gubernatorial campaign team. Coleman then joined Ben Espy's campaign for the Columbus City Council, and served as Espy's legislative aide after his election. He persuaded Melvin Schottenstein to fund the Columbus Youth Corps; and, shortly afterwards, Schottenstein hired him as the first black associate at his law firm in Columbus.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Michael B. Coleman, Section A2012_100_001_006, TRT: 6:28:46 ?

The Honorable Michael B. Coleman served as an associate at the law firm of Schottenstein Zox and Dunn Co. LPA in Columbus, Ohio. During this time, he also belonged to the Columbus Convention Center Citizens Advisory Group and the Retailers Task Force for the Downtown Development. During the 1980s, Coleman won a community service award from the Columbus Bar Association. In 1993, he applied for the presidency of the Columbus City Council, and was voted onto the council, where he became president in 1997. In this role, Coleman formed the Columbus Urban Growth Corporation, and developed youth programs and infrastructure projects. Following a failed gubernatorial campaign with Lee Fisher, Coleman announced his candidacy for the mayoralty of Columbus in 1998. He defeated Ben Espy, and became Columbus' longest serving mayor. During his tenure, the City of Columbus experienced two recessions and a housing crisis, during which Coleman worked to attract graduates from the city's surrounding colleges and universities.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Michael B. Coleman, Section A2012_100_001_007, TRT: 7:29:44 ?

The Honorable Michael B. Coleman was elected mayor of Columbus, Ohio in 2000, and continued to serve at the time of the interview. He was the city's first African American mayor; and, early in his term, he became the target of heightened scrutiny in local newspapers like the Columbus Dispatch. Even so, the press found that Coleman upheld his campaign promises. He focused on redeveloping inner city neighborhoods like Franklinton and the King-Lincoln district, and implemented cultural preservation projects at sites like the Lincoln Theatre. He recently announced plans to narrow the Scioto River in order to increase green space and developable land. Coleman's redevelopment efforts were hindered by the recession of 2001 and the policies of President George Walker Bush, who decreased federal funding for city development. Relations with the White House improved in 2008, when President Barack Obama began

approving federal aid grants for redevelopment in Columbus.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Michael B. Coleman, Section
A2012_100_001_008, TRT: 8:03:25 ?

The Honorable Michael B. Coleman describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community. He also talks about his family, including his children: John Coleman, who served as a sergeant in the U.S. Marine Corps; Justin Coleman, who was a police officer in Columbus, Ohio; and Kimberly Coleman, who worked as a banker in Chicago, Illinois. Coleman concludes the interview by describing how he would like to be remembered.