

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Radm. Stephen Rochon

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Rochon, Stephen W., 1950-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Radm. Stephen Rochon,
Dates:	August 8, 2013
Bulk Dates:	2013
Physical Description:	10 uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:36:22).
Abstract:	Rear admiral Radm. Stephen Rochon (1950 -) served as director of personnel management in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita in 2005, and went on to become the first African American director of the Executive Residence and usher at the White House where he served under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. Rochon was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 8, 2013, in Alexandria, Virginia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2013_184
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

U.S. Coast Guard Rear Admiral Stephen W. Rochon was born in New Orleans, Louisiana and enlisted in the U. S. Coast Guard in 1970. He received a commission as an ensign in 1975 from the Officer Candidate School at Yorktown, Virginia. He then was assigned to Marine Safety Office (MSO) in California as assistant port operations and intelligence officer. In 1979, he served in the Coast Guard Reserve while attending Xavier University of Louisiana and graduated from there with his B.S. degree in business administration. Rochon then graduated from the National Defense University's Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) in 1999 with his M.S. degree in national resource strategy. In 2002, he also completed the Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government Senior Executive Program for National and International Security, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology School of Management.

In 1984, Rochon returned to active duty and served as Chief of the Reserve Training Branch of the Ninth Coast Guard District in Cleveland, Ohio. In this capacity, Rochon organized the Coast Guard's first combat skills course with the Marine Corps in Quantico, Virginia and served on temporary duty in the Middle East to train the Royal Jordanian Coast Guard. Rochon served as the Coast Guard's director of personnel management in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita in 2005 where he provided support for Coast Guard personnel and their families. In 2006, Rochon became the Commander of Maintenance and Logistics Command at the U.S. Coast Guard's Atlantic Headquarters; and, in 2007, he was named Director of the Executive Residence and Chief Usher at the White House for former President George W. Bush. The first African American to hold the position, Rochon ran the executive mansion for four years for Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, executing all major events at the White House and preserving the nation's most historic home.

His military awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, three Legion of Merit Medals, two Meritorious

Service Medals, two Coast Guard Commendation Medals, two Department of Transportation 9/11 Medals, two Coast Guard Achievement Medals, two Commandant's Letter of Commendation Ribbons, among twenty service and unit awards. His civilian awards include the 1989 Coast Guard Equal Opportunity Achievement Award, the 1990 United Negro College Fund Leadership Award, the 1997 Port of Baltimore Vital Link Award, the 1998 Vice President Gore Hammer Award, the 1998 NAACP Roy P. Wilkins Renowned Service Award, the 2001 World Trade Center New Orleans C. Alvin Bertel Award, the 2002 Greater New Orleans Barge Fleeting Association Maritime Person of the Year, the 2007 Ellis Island Medal of Honor, and the 2009 Spirit of Hope Award.

U.S. Coast Guard Rear Admiral Stephen W. Rochon was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on August 8, 2013.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with RADM. Stephen Rochon was conducted by Larry Crowe on August 8, 2013, in Alexandria, Virginia, and was recorded on 10 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Rear admiral RADM. Stephen Rochon (1950 -) served as director of personnel management in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita in 2005, and went on to become the first African American director of the Executive Residence and usher at the White House where he served under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama.

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:

Rochon, Stephen W., 1950-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Rochon, Stephen W., 1950- --Interviews

United States--Armed Forces--African American Officers--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

United States. Coast Guard

Occupations:

Rear Admiral

HistoryMakers® Category:

MilitaryMakers

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 RADM. Stephen Rochon, August 8, 2013. 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 Radm. Stephen Rochon, Section A2013_184_001_001, TRT: 1:28:27 ?

Stephen Rochon describes his family's history. Rochon's mother, Ursula Bernice Carrere, was born in 1924, in New Orleans, Louisiana. She traced her family to Northern France, Martinique and Mexico. Rochon's grandparents lived in New Orleans, where his grandfather, Emile Carrere was a Pullman porter. After his grandmother, Hildred DeSalle Carrere's death, his grandfather raised his six children by himself. Rochon's mother spent part of her childhood at the Oblate Sisters of Providence convent in Baltimore, Maryland, before returning home to attend Xavier Prep High School, where she met his father. His father, Gilbert Leonard Rochon, was born in Lake Charles, Louisiana, in 1925. His family also originated in Northern France and moved to Canada and Louisiana to colonize the regions. He attended Xavier University, and went on to become a successful pharmacist. After Rochon's parents divorced, his family lived with his maternal grandfather. He also talks about his relationship with his father.

African American families.

African American mothers--Louisiana.

African American grandparents.

African American fathers--Louisiana.

Fathers and sons.

Racially mixed people--Louisiana.

Video Oral History Interview with Radm. Stephen Rochon, Section A2013_184_001_002, TRT: 2:29:29 ?

Stephen Rochon and his siblings were raised by their mother and grandfather in New Orleans, Louisiana. He talks about his similarities to his mother and grandfather. Rochon attended Blessed Sacrament School and Xavier Prep High School, and discusses his career aspirations as a child. He describes his childhood memories of New Orleans and the festivities of Mardi Gras. Rochon fondly recalls his family going on road trips in his mother's car, particularly their trip to Washington, D.C. He grew up in the segregated south where he experienced racism, and found the environment to be more integrated on his trip to D.C. Rochon also talks about his step-father, Ulysses Jupiter's name.

Childhood--Louisiana--New Orleans.

Education--Louisiana--New Orleans.

Family vacations.

Segregation--Louisiana--New Orleans.

Video Oral History Interview with Radm. Stephen Rochon, Section A2013_184_001_003, TRT: 3:30:22 ?

Stephen Rochon attended Blessed Sacrament School in New Orleans, Louisiana, where he took an interest in chemistry and writing, but disliked history and math. He then attended Xavier University Preparatory High School, where he became interested in mechanical drawing. He also played in his high school

band for four years, became president of the band in his senior year, and started a small band that won a competition at Xavier University. He discusses his experience in high school where he became president of the student body and played sports. He talks about his interest in music, as well as his family's musical inclinations. After high school, Rochon enrolled in Xavier University, where he pursued his interest in chemistry. He describes his experience in the pharmacy department and his college professors that influenced him. He also discusses his decision to join the U.S. Coast Guard during the time of the Vietnam War.

Catholic education--Louisiana.

Education--Louisiana--New Orleans.

Music--Instruction & Study.

Xavier University of Louisiana.

United States. Coast Guard.

Video Oral History Interview with Radm. Stephen Rochon, Section A2013_184_001_004, TRT: 4:28:04 ?

Stephen Rochon joined the U.S. Coast Guard in 1970, and describes his early experience there. From 1973 to 1975, he served at the USCG Recruiting Office in New Orleans. In 1975, he was selected to attend Officer Candidate School, and then assigned as chief of the Special Interest Vessel Program and as an intelligence officer at the Marine Safety Office in Los Angeles. Rochon talks about his divorce, custody of his son, and his relationship with his father during this period. In 1978, he resigned from active duty and joined his father's pharmacy business. Following its bankruptcy, he worked in the real estate industry for a few years and earned his B.S. degree in business administration from Xavier University. In 1984, Rochon returned to active duty. He served as Chief of the Reserve Training Branch of the 9th District in Cleveland, Chief of the Port Security Branch, Chief of Officer Recruiting and Chief of the Officer Programs Branch at the USCG headquarters. In 1992, he became a lieutenant commander.

United States. Coast Guard.

Divorce.

Fathers and sons.

Xavier University of Louisiana.

African American businesspeople.

United States. Coast Guard--Recruiting, enlistment, etc.

Video Oral History Interview with Radm. Stephen Rochon, Section A2013_184_001_005, TRT: 5:29:30 ?

From 1987 to 1992, Stephen Rochon served in several capacities at the U.S. Coast Guard headquarters in Washington, D.C. While there, he met and married his second wife, became interested in black history in the Coast Guard, and met Alex Haley, who became his mentor. In 1995, Rochon served as the deputy commander of MIO/Activities in Baltimore, Maryland. In 1998, he attended the National Defense University at Fort McNair, graduating with his M.S. degree in national resource strategy before being appointed as the commanding officer of the Coast Guard Marine Safety Office in New Orleans. In 2000, Rochon was promoted to the rank of rear admiral, becoming only the second African American to hold this position after Erroll Brown. He goes on to talk about his service in the U.S. Department of Transportation and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Rochon also reflects upon the absence of a significant

African American presence in the Coast Guard when he joined the service in the 1970s.

United States. Coast Guard--African Americans.

Haley, Alex.

Marriage.

National Defense University.

United States. Coast Guard--Appointments, promotions, salaries, etc.

United States. Department of Transportation.

September 11 Terrorist Attacks, 2001.

Video Oral History Interview with Radm. Stephen Rochon, Section A2013_184_001_006, TRT: 6:28:20 ?

From 2002 to 2003, Stephen Rochon served at the Department of Transportation, where he was involved in the development of the Transportation Security Agency (TSA) in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. He describes his experience there and his next assignment as the acting assistant commandant for Intelligence in the U.S. Coast Guard. Rochon also discusses his assignment as the director of Personnel Management, his command in Norfolk, Virginia, and his involvement in relief efforts following Hurricane Katrina. In 2007, ninety days prior to his retirement from the Coast Guard, Rochon received a call from The White House, recruiting him for the position of Chief Usher of The White House. He describes his interview process, being selected for the position, and the history and responsibilities of the position.

United States. Department of Transportation.

United States. Transportation Security Administration.

September 11 Terrorist Attacks, 2001.

United States. Coast Guard.

Hurricane Katrina, 2005.

White House (Washington, D.C.)

Presidents--United States--Staff.

Video Oral History Interview with Radm. Stephen Rochon, Section A2013_184_001_007, TRT: 7:32:51 ?

In 2007, Stephen Rochon was appointed as the Chief Usher of the White House during President George W. Bush's presidency. In this section of the interview, Rochon talks about his responsibilities as the chief usher, the demographics of the White House staff members, and their longevity of service. He also talks about the details of the transition of the White House between presidencies, as one First Family departs and another arrives. Rochon also describes his experience as the chief usher during President Barack Obama's presidency.

White House (Washington, D.C.)

Presidents--United States--Staff.

Bush, George W. (George Walker), 1946-

Obama, Barack.

Video Oral History Interview with Radm. Stephen Rochon, Section A2013_184_001_008, TRT: 8:30:01 ?

Stephen Rochon served as the chief usher of the White House from 2007 to 2011. He discusses working with the Secret Service, the State dinner for the Queen of England, Pope Benedict's visit, the differences between the Bush and Obama family's lives in the White House, and his wife's and mother's reaction

and support of his position. In 2011, Rochon retired as the chief usher, and went on to serve for a year as the principal executive for strategic integration and chief strategy officer at U.S. Customs and Border Protection. He also talks about the subject of the book that he is writing, and consulting for the film, 'Lee Daniels' The Butler'.

Presidents--United States--Staff.

White House (Washington, D.C.)

Elizabeth--II,--Queen of Great Britain,--1926-

Bush, George W. (George Walker), 1946-

Obama, Barack.

United States. Bureau of Customs and Border Protection.

Video Oral History Interview with Radm. Stephen Rochon, Section A2013_184_001_009, TRT: 9:32:09 ?

Stephen Rochon was the first African American to serve as the chief usher of The White House. His character was portrayed in Lee Daniels' 2013 film, 'The Butler'. Rochon talks about the movie, including research and filming in New Orleans, Louisiana. In this section of the interview, Rochon reflects upon his life and career, his legacy, opportunities in the U.S. Coast Guard and his hopes and concerns for the African American community. He also talks about his family and how he would like to be remembered. He closes the interview by describing his photographs.

Daniels, Lee, 1959-

Film-making (Motion Pictures)

Presidents--United States--Staff.

United States. Coast Guard.

Reminiscing.

Video Oral History Interview with Radm. Stephen Rochon, Section A2013_184_001_010, TRT: 10:07:09 ?

Stephen Rochon describes his photographs.

Photographs.