

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable James Clyburn

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Clyburn, James
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable James Clyburn,
Dates:	May 20, 2014
Bulk Dates:	2014
Physical Description:	3 uncompressed MOV digital video files (1:34:33).
Abstract:	U.S. congressman The Honorable James Clyburn (1940 -) , assistant house democratic leader in the U.S. House of Representatives, was elected to Congress in 1992. He was the author of 'Uncommon Courage: The Story of Briggs V. Elliott, South Carolina's Unsung Civil Rights Battle' and 'Blessed Experiences: Genuinely Southern, Proudly Black.' Clyburn was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 20, 2014, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2014_108
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

United States Congressman James Enos "Jim" Clyburn was born on July 21, 1940 in Sumter, South Carolina to Enos Lloyd Clyburn, a fundamentalist minister, and Almeta Clyburn, a beautician. Clyburn was elected president of his NAACP youth chapter when he was twelve years old, and went on to help organize many civil rights marches and demonstrations as a student leader at South Carolina State College (now South Carolina State University), where he graduated in 1962 with

his B.S. degree in history. He later attended the University of South Carolina Law School.

Upon graduation from South Carolina State College, Clyburn was hired as a social studies teacher at C.A. Brown High School in Charleston, South Carolina. From 1965 to 1971, he worked as an employment counselor, a director of youth programs and led the South Carolina Farm Workers Commission. After an unsuccessful run for the South Carolina General Assembly, Clyburn joined the staff of Governor John C. West in 1971 and was appointed as the first minority advisor to a South Carolina governor. In 1974, he was named the South Carolina Human Affairs Commissioner. He served in that position until 1992 when he stepped down to run for U.S. Congress. In November of 1992, Clyburn was elected the U.S. Representative for South Carolina's 6th Congressional District, becoming the state's first African American to serve in Congress since 1897.

As a Congressman, Clyburn was elected co-president of his freshman class in 1993, and was unanimously elected chair of the Congressional Black Caucus in 1998. In 2002, he won an election among three House members to serve as vice chair of the House Democratic Caucus. Clyburn rose to the position of caucus chair in January 2006, and in 2007, he became the first South Carolinian to serve as house majority whip. In 2011, he became the assistant house democratic leader and the third-ranking Democrat in the House of Representatives.

Clyburn has served as Steering Committee Chairman for the International Museum of African American History in Charleston, South Carolina, and as a member of the governing boards of Allen University in Columbia, South Carolina; Brookgreen Gardens in Murrells Inlet, South Carolina; and The Palmetto Conservation Foundation. In addition, he has been awarded honorary doctorate degrees by numerous colleges and universities, and has authored two books: *Uncommon Courage: The Story of Briggs V. Elliott, South Carolina's Unsung Civil Rights Battle* (2004); and *Blessed Experiences: Genuinely Southern, Proudly Black* (2014).

Clyburn and his wife, Emily, live in Columbia, South Carolina. They have three daughters: Mignon, Jennifer Reed, and Angela Hannibal.

U.S. Congressman Jim Clyburn was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on May 20, 2014.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable James Clyburn was conducted by Larry Crowe on May 20, 2014, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 3 uncompressed MOV digital video files. U.S. congressman The Honorable James Clyburn (1940 -) , assistant house democratic leader in the U.S. House of Representatives, was elected to Congress in 1992. He was the author of 'Uncommon Courage: The Story of Briggs V. Elliott, South Carolina's Unsung Civil Rights Battle' and 'Blessed Experiences: Genuinely Southern, Proudly Black.'

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:

Clyburn, James

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Clyburn, James--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

U.S. Congressman

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 James Clyburn, May 20, 2014. 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 James Clyburn,
Section A2014_108_001_001, TRT: 1:33:29 2014/05/20

The Honorable James Clyburn was born on July 21, 1940 in Sumter, South Carolina to Almeta Dizzley Clyburn and Enos Clyburn. His maternal grandfather, John Dizzley, owned farmland in South Carolina, and refused to plant tobacco, the local cash crop, because he considered smoking to be sinful. He was a minister in the Church of God, and guided Clyburn's father to become a minister as well. Clyburn's paternal grandfather was believed to be U.S. Congressman George Washington Murray, who was the only black member of the 53rd and 54th Congresses. Clyburn's parents met while his mother was a student at the Browning Model Home and Industrial School in Camden, South Carolina. She transferred to Camden's Jackson High School in order to graduate early and marry. Clyburn's parents then moved to Sumter, where his father studied at Morris College. He was barred from graduating

because he lacked a high school diploma, as there were no black high schools during his youth; but he was later granted an honorary degree.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable James Clyburn,
Section A2014_108_001_002, TRT: 2:32:51 2014/05/20

The Honorable James Clyburn's paternal grandfather, George Washington Murray, was a 19th century U.S. Congressman and landowner from South Carolina. After the passage of Jim Crow laws, he sold land to black families to enable them to vote. In reprisal, he was convicted of forgery by an all-white jury. Murray fled to Chicago, Illinois, where he spent the rest of his life. Clyburn's father, Enos Clyburn, was raised by his mother, Phoebe Lloyd Clyburn, in South Carolina. He met Clyburn's mother, Almeta Dizzley Clyburn, while she was a student in Camden, South Carolina. After their marriage, they moved to Sumter, South Carolina, where Clyburn's father studied at Morris College. Lacking a high school diploma, he was unable to graduate; and instead he worked in Sumter as a carpenter and minister of the Church of God. Clyburn grew up in Sumter with his two brothers, John Clyburn and Charles Clyburn. His father was posthumously awarded a degree from Morris College.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable James Clyburn,
Section A2014_108_001_003, TRT: 3:28:13 2014/05/20

The Honorable James Clyburn's mother, Almeta Dizzley Clyburn, was born and raised in South Carolina. She settled with Clyburn's father, Enos Clyburn, in Sumter, South Carolina; while many of her siblings moved north to cities like Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Baltimore, Maryland; New York City and Washington, D.C. In Sumter, Clyburn's father served as a minister and the president of the Church of God presbytery. Clyburn often accompanied him to council meetings in Darlington, South Carolina, where he learned the importance of diplomacy. Clyburn's mother taught kindergarten at his father's church, where Clyburn attended school until the first grade. He then enrolled at Lincoln High School. He transferred to Liberty Street Elementary School during the fourth grade, and then spent two years at Savage Glover School before returning to Lincoln High School. Due to

his poor behavior there, Clyburn was sent to the Mather Academy in Camden, South Carolina, where he earned his high school diploma.