

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Roger L. Gregory

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Gregory, Roger
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Roger L. Gregory,
<b>Dates:</b>	December 9, 2016
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2016
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:05:37).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Judge Roger L. Gregory (1953 - ) was appointed to serve as a judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in 2001, becoming the first African American chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in 2016. Gregory was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on December 9, 2016, in Richmond, Virginia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2016_102
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Judge Roger L. Gregory was born on July 17, 1953 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, but raised in Petersburg, Virginia. He graduated from Petersburg High School in 1971, and enrolled at Virginia State University, where he graduated summa cum laude in 1975, and earned his J.D. degree from the University of Michigan Law School in 1978.

In 1978, Gregory became the first African American attorney at the law firm of Butzel, Long, Gust, Klein & Van Zile in Detroit. In 1980, he joined the Richmond

law firm of Hunton & Williams LLP. Gregory was nominated by President Bill Clinton to be the first African American judge on the Richmond-based U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, but the Senate refused to hold Gregory's confirmation hearing. He was then nominated by President George W. Bush and confirmed in 2001. In 2014, he joined the majority opinion on *Bostic v. Schaefer*, which overturned Virginia's ban on same-sex marriage. Also that year, Gregory authored the court's unanimous opinion on *King v. Burwell*, which upheld tax subsidies for health insurance purchased on federal exchanges under the Affordable Care Act. In 2016, Gregory became the first African American chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

Gregory has served on numerous boards, including: Richmond Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, Richmond Arts Council, Virginia State University Foundation, Richmond Bar Association, and Central Virginia Legal Aid Society. He served as president of the Friends Association for Children and the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia. Gregory was chairman of the Industrial Development Authority of Richmond and the executive committee of Richmond Renaissance. Gregory also sat on the board of ChildFund International and served on the board of the Virginia Historical Society. He serves as trustee emeritus on the Board of Trustees at the University of Richmond. He serves on the Junior Board of Directors of the John Marshall Foundation. He is a member of the American Bar Association and was keynote speaker for the opening assembly at the 2005 ABA annual meeting in Chicago. He is a member of the National Bar Association and the Old Dominion Bar Association of which Gregory is a past president. He is a member of the State Bar of Michigan and Virginia.

He was the recipient of many awards, including the 1997 National Conference of Christians and Jews Humanitarian Award. He was featured in *Ebony* magazine as one of the "56 Most Intriguing Blacks of 2001." In 2002, he received the Pioneer Visionary Award from the National Black Student Leadership Development Conference. In 2003, Judge Gregory received the Dominion Resources Strong Men and Women: Excellence in Leadership Award. Gregory was also awarded the Old Dominion Bar Association's L. Douglas Wilder Vanguard Award. He was also awarded the National Bar Association's Gertrude E. Rush and Equal Justice Awards, and the Thurgood Marshall Award of Excellence. In 2015, he received the Washington Bar Association's Charles Hamilton Houston Merit Medallion.

Roger L. Gregory was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on December 9, 2016.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Roger L. Gregory was conducted by Larry Crowe on December 9, 2016, in Richmond, Virginia, and was recorded on 5 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Judge Roger L. Gregory (1953 - ) was appointed to serve as a judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in 2001, becoming the first African American chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in 2016.

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## **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®.

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## **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.

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## **Controlled Access Terms**

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### **Persons:**

Gregory, Roger

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

**Subjects:**

African Americans--Interviews  
Gregory, Roger--Interviews

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**Organizations:**

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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**Occupations:**

Judge

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**HistoryMakers® Category:**

LawMakers

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**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 Roger L. Gregory, December 9, 2016. The HistoryMakers® African

## 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).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Roger L. Gregory,  
Section A2016\_102\_001\_001, TRT: 1:29:15 2016/12/09

The Honorable Roger L. Gregory was born on July 17, 1953 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and was adopted as an infant by Fannie Washington Gregory and George L. Gregory. Gregory's adoptive maternal grandmother died young, and his mother was raised by her aunt, Susan Washington. Gregory's mother worked as a dormitory maid at the Virginia State College for Negroes in Petersburg, Virginia. She was later hired at the Brown and Williamson tobacco factory, where she met Gregory's adoptive father. Gregory's paternal grandparents, Emma Dabney Gregory and George Gregory, separated when his father was a child. He lived with various family members until joining the Civilian Conservation Corps. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II, and later became a gospel singer. Gregory grew up in the predominantly black Heights of Petersburg, Virginia, and attended Virginia Avenue Elementary School. His family attended

Good Shepherd Baptist Church, and toured with his father's singing group.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Roger L. Gregory,  
Section A2016\_102\_001\_002, TRT: 2:28:48 2016/12/09

The Honorable Roger L. Gregory studied black history at Virginia Avenue Elementary School in Petersburg, Virginia. He saw Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. speak at Petersburg's First Baptist Church, and later on the campus of Virginia State College. Gregory attended the all-black Peabody High School until his senior year, when the Petersburg City Public Schools were integrated. At that time, Gregory was sent to Petersburg High School, where he graduated in 1971. He studied political science at Virginia State College, and took part in the moot court and Model United Nations. After graduating summa cum laude, Gregory enrolled at the University of Michigan Law School in Ann Arbor. He interned at the state prosecutor's office in Richmond, Virginia, and at a law firm in Detroit, Michigan, where he accepted a full time position after graduating in 1978. Two years later, Gregory returned to Virginia as an associate at Hunton and Williams LLP. That year, he married Carla Lewis Gregory.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Roger L. Gregory,  
Section A2016\_102\_001\_003, TRT: 3:31:01 2016/12/09

The Honorable Roger L. Gregory cofounded the law firm of Wilder and Gregory in Richmond, Virginia. His partner, L. Douglas Wilder, was a Virginia state senator at the time, and left the firm to become the governor of Virginia in 1990. In 2000, President Bill Clinton nominated Gregory to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. After the approval hearing was delayed by U.S. Senate, President Clinton installed Gregory via a temporary recess appointment. The following year, Gregory was reappointed by President George W. Bush. As a judge, Gregory presided over the trial of Zacarias Moussaoui, who was convicted of conspiring to kill U.S. citizens on September 11, 2001. In 2014, he ruled on the case of *Bostic v. Schaefer*, lifting Virginia's ban on same sex marriage. Outside of the courtroom, Gregory created a documentary on attorney Oliver W. Hill with the Old Dominion Bar Association, and served on the *Brown v.*

Board of Education 50th Anniversary Commission and the Virginia Commonwealth University board.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Roger L. Gregory,  
Section A2016\_102\_001\_004, TRT: 4:27:54 2016/12/09

The Honorable Roger L. Gregory presided over the trial of King v. Burwell, where he ruled in 2014 that the Affordable Care Act was constitutional. His decision was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. Gregory's first wife, Carla Lewis Gregory, passed away from cancer in 2009, and Gregory remarried in 2015 to Velda Edwards Gregory. In 2016, Gregory became the first African American chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. At the time of the interview, he served on the Judicial Conference of the United States under the U.S. Supreme Court's Chief Justice John Roberts. At this point, Gregory talks about the complexity of police brutality cases, and reflects upon the improvements needed in the criminal justice system. He also describes his judicial philosophy, which was modeled on the ideas of Thurgood Marshall and Felix Frankfurter. Gregory reflects upon his hopes and concerns for the African American community, as well as his life, legacy and how he would like to be remembered.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Roger L. Gregory,  
Section A2016\_102\_001\_005, TRT: 5:08:39 2016/12/09

The Honorable Roger L. Gregory narrates his photographs.