

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable H. Ron White

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	White, H. Ron, 1941-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable H. Ron White,
Dates:	March 14, 2017
Bulk Dates:	2017
Physical Description:	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:04:00).
Abstract:	Judge and lawyer H. Ron White (1941 -) was appointed State of Texas District Court Judge and was named “Trial Lawyer of the Year” by the Dallas Bar Association in 2004. White was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 14, 2017, in Dallas, Texas. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2017_069
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Judge and lawyer H. Ron White was born on February 10, 1941 in Richmond, Virginia to Ernest White and Mattie White. He graduated from Maggie L. Walter High School in 1958. White received his B.S. degree in biology and chemistry from Hampton University in 1962, and his J.D. degree from Howard University in 1971. After graduation from Hampton University, White joined the U.S. Army in 1962. He was stationed in Kaiserslautern and Mannheim, Germany, and at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. From 1967 until 1968, White served a tour of duty in Vietnam, and was stationed in Quin Yan. By the end of his military service, he had reached the rank of captain. White began his professional career in 1971 at the Atlantic Richfield Oil Company as an environmental and labor attorney. He was promoted to the position of federal regulatory compliance counsel in 1974. Two years later, White joined Irvin & White, P.C., which became White, Mahomes, and Briscoe, P.C. the following year. In 1979, White established the Law Offices of H. Ron White & Associates. He then served as a district court judge in the State of Texas after being appointed to the position in 1983. White returned to his private law practice in 1985, and served as a partner at White & Wiggins.

In addition to his law practice, White has been active in a number of organizations. Specifically, he has been a board member of The General Counsel Forum for the Dallas and Fort Worth Chapter, and the Urban League of Greater Dallas and North Texas. White has also been a member of the Texas Bar College and the National Bar Association, as well as a Life Fellow of Texas Bar Foundation.

White has been recognized and awarded for his contributions to the community. In 2004, White was named as “Trial Lawyer of the Year” by the Dallas Bar. He also received the Dallas Bar Foundation Fellows Award for Outstanding Service to the Bar and Civic Community in 2006. White was named as one of the fifty “Lions of the Texas Bar” by *The Texas Lawbook*, as well as a Texas Super Lawyer by Martindale-Hubbell in 2005 and from 2010 through 2015.

White and his wife, Rita C. White, have one son, Eric.

H. Ron White was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 14, 2017.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable H. Ron White was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 14, 2017, in Dallas, Texas, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Judge and lawyer H. Ron White (1941 -) was appointed State of Texas District Court Judge and was named “Trial Lawyer of the Year” by the Dallas Bar Association in 2004

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:

White, H. Ron, 1941-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

White, H. Ron, 1941- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Judge

Lawyer

HistoryMakers® Category:

LawMakers

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 H. Ron White, March 14, 2017. 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 H. Ron White, Section A2017_069_001_001,
TRT: 1:29:49 ?

H. Ron White was born on February 10, 1941 in Richmond, Virginia to Mattie

Starke White and Ernest White, Sr. His mother was the oldest daughter of five sisters and five brothers. White's maternal grandfather, George Starke, was involved in their local community in Henrico County, Virginia, and worked for the Trailways National Bus System while his maternal grandmother, Hattie Starke, was a homemaker. His father was born in Richmond to Carter White and Eva White. He attended Virginia Randolph High School, where he met White's mother. After graduating, White's mother became a certified licensed practical nurse (LPN) while his father was enlisted in the U.S. Navy. White and his parents lived briefly in Riverside, California while his father was stationed there. They returned to Richmond in 1946, where his two siblings were born. At six years old, White began his education at Richmond's Westwood Elementary School. He also talks about his son, Eric White, who established a successful career as an audio engineer.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable H. Ron White, Section A2017_069_001_002, TRT: 2:30:39 ?

H. Ron White was raised in a small black community in the Westwood neighborhood of Richmond, Virginia that was originally established for the house servants of the white middle class residents nearby. In 1946, he entered Westwood School, which was a two room schoolhouse. During this time, school integration began in other parts of the country, but Richmond remained segregated. After one year, White transferred to the all-black George Washington Carver Elementary School. He went on to attend Benjamin Graves Junior High School and Maggie L. Walker High School, where he learned to play alto saxophone and bassoon in the school band under the leadership of jazz violinist Joe Kennedy, Jr. He also developed an interest in science, which led to his science projects on hydroponics and his collection of over eight hundred insect species. In his spare time, he delivered newspapers and shined shoes at a white barbershop. White's father, Ernest White, Sr., caddied and played golf at Richmond's Westwood Club.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable H. Ron White, Section A2017_069_001_003, TRT: 3:30:00 ?

H. Ron White graduated from Maggie L. Walker High School in 1958, and entered the Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia. There, he studied biology and chemistry, and became especially interested in radiation and hydroponics. While at the Hampton Institute, White played the alto saxophone and bassoon in the band and orchestra; participated in the college's ROTC program; and became a member of the National Society of Pershing Rifles. He was also involved in the black social fraternities on campus. During this time, White reconnected with his childhood friend, Rita White, who was studying zoology at Howard University. In 1962, White graduated from the Hampton Institute, and married Rita White before becoming a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army. His first assignment was in the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps at the USAG Kaiserslautern Army Base in Germany. He also describes the impact of the film 'Hidden Figures' and his early experiences of religion at Westwood Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable H. Ron White, Section A2017_069_001_004, TRT: 4:32:48 ?

H. Ron White attended the Hampton Institute in Hampton, Virginia, where he participated in civil rights protests. Following his graduation in 1962, he became a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army, and was sent to the USAG Kaiserslautern Army Base and USAG Mannheim near Heidelberg, Germany. At this point, White remembers learning of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy's

and Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. In 1965, he returned to the United States, but was deployed to Vietnam a year later. At Qui Nhon Airfield, he was responsible for supplying the petroleum products; and in his spare time, he formed a small jazz ensemble. He considered pursuing a career in Corporate America but ultimately decided to enter the legal profession after his release. White studied at Howard University School of Law under the tutelage of Elwood Chisholm, and clerked for the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia. After graduating in 1971, he was recruited by Atlantic Richfield Company in Dallas, Texas.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable H. Ron White, Section A2017_069_001_005, TRT: 5:31:22 ?

H. Ron White was interviewed by Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO) in Dallas, Texas in 1971. Unfamiliar with the area, he met with African American lawyers in Dallas like Louis A. Bedford, Jr. and C.B. Bunkley, Jr. before deciding to accept the environmental and labor attorney position at ARCO. In this role, he became the first African American corporate lawyer in the City of Dallas. White became increasingly involved in the organizations in Dallas. He joined the Dallas Bar Association, and was invited to a Canadian Bar Association conference in Calgary, Canada. White also became a member of the Dallas Negro Chamber of Commerce, and helped found the Committee of 100 to improve the economic opportunities for the African Americans who were migrating to the South. The Committee of 100 hosted speakers like Earl G. Graves, Sr. and Secretary of Commerce Maurice Stans. White also talks about the changing demographics of Texas, and the creation of the black bar association, J.L. Turner Legal Association.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable H. Ron White, Section A2017_069_001_006, TRT: 6:29:22 ?

H. Ron White arrived in Dallas, Texas in the early 1970s. From 1965 to 1985, African American political leadership grew drastically with the elections of George L. Allen, Juanita Craft and Lucy Patterson in the local government and Joseph E. Lockridge and Eddie Bernice Johnson in the state legislature. In 1973, Dallas city officials introduced a plan to desegregate schools through busing, which was criticized by residents. As a member of the Dallas Negro Chamber of Commerce, White helped transition the organization to the Dallas Black Chamber of Commerce after it had faced financial hardships. Through his involvement with the Committee of 100, he educated Dallas business leaders and African American residents about the changing corporate landscape following desegregation. At this point in the interview, White describes the Committee of 100 and its sister organization, Women of Dallas United for Action. He also talks about the importance of community support for African Americans moving to different cities.