

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Christopher P. Reynolds

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Reynolds, Christopher P., 1963-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Christopher P. Reynolds,
Dates:	March 20, 2017
Bulk Dates:	2017
Physical Description:	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:21:25).
Abstract:	Lawyer Christopher P. Reynolds (1963 -) served as the Assistant U.S. Attorney of New York before joining Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A. Inc. as the group vice president of business law and becoming the first African American managing officer, general counsel, and chief legal officer for Toyota in 2015. Reynolds was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 20, 2017, in Plano, Texas. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2017_073
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Lawyer Christopher P. Reynolds was born on January 11, 1963 in Queens, New York to Lee H. Reynolds and Phyllis M. Graham. He graduated from Kalamazoo College in Kalamazoo, Michigan with his B.A. degree in political science in 1983. Reynolds went on to attend Harvard Law School and received his J.D. degree in 1986.

After graduation, Reynolds worked as a law clerk for the United States Court of Appeals Sixth District under Judge Damon J. Keith. In 1987, he relocated to New York City and began working as a litigator for the law firm of Hughes, Hubbard, & Reed, LLP. There, he specialized in liability and class action defense work. Two years later, he became the Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York in the criminal justice division of the U.S. Attorney's office, and served in this position for five years. At the end of his term, Reynolds joined the law firm of Morgan, Lewis, & Bockius, LLP as a partner and trial lawyer. In this position, he served as manager of the labor and employment law litigation group, was a member of the firm's advisory board, and was chair of the firm's diversity committee. In 2007, Reynolds joined Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. as the vice president of business law within the company's legal services division. He played an integral role in the Toyota Recall Crisis of 2009. Reynolds was promoted to the position of general counsel and chief legal officer of Toyota Motor North America in 2012. In 2015, he was appointed as the managing officer, general counsel, and chief legal officer of the Toyota Motor Corporation. He is the first African American to hold these global positions for the Toyota Motor Corporation. Reynolds was then named executive vice president, corporate resources and chief diversity officer of Toyota Motor North America in 2017.

In addition to his law practice, Reynolds has been involved with a number of organizations. He has served on the board of trustees for Kalamazoo College, and on the board of directors for The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and the Los Angeles Urban League.

Reynolds and his wife, Arlene Ford, have three children.

Christopher P. Reynolds was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 23, 2017.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Christopher P. Reynolds was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on March 20, 2017, in Plano, Texas, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Lawyer Christopher P. Reynolds (1963 -) served as the Assistant U.S. Attorney of New York before joining Toyota Motor Sales U.S.A. Inc. as the group vice president of business law and becoming the first African American managing officer, general counsel, and chief legal officer for Toyota in 2015.

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:

Reynolds, Christopher P., 1963-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Reynolds, Christopher P., 1963- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Corporate General Counsel

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 Christopher P. Reynolds, March 20, 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 Christopher P. Reynolds, Section A2017_073_001_001, TRT: 1:31:26 ?

Christopher P. Reynolds was born on January 11, 1963 in Queens, New York to

Phyllis Todd Graham and Lee Reynolds, Jr. After the death of Reynolds' paternal grandfather, Lee Reynolds, Sr., Reynolds' father was raised by Reynolds' grandmother, Gussie Reynolds, who worked as a domestic in the Main Line area of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Reynolds' father later served in the New York Police Department and the National Urban League Law Enforcement Minority Manpower Project. Reynolds' maternal grandparents, Amy Todd and Austin Todd, met in Bermuda, and eventually moved to Philadelphia. Reynolds' mother met Reynolds' father in high school, and then she attended the Lincoln Hospital School for Nurses in New York City. She raised Reynolds and his three older siblings as a single mother in West Philadelphia. As a child, Reynolds often spent time at his maternal grandparents' home in Williamstown, New Jersey. After Reynolds' mother remarried, the family moved to Detroit, Michigan.

Video Oral History Interview with Christopher P. Reynolds, Section A2017_073_001_002, TRT: 2:30:07 ?

Christopher P. Reynolds' mother, Phyllis Todd Graham, married Reynolds' stepfather, Garfield Graham, in 1968. The family then moved from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to northwest Detroit, Michigan. There, Reynolds was raised along with his four stepsiblings in a middle class, majority-black community. An active child, Reynolds joined the Boy Scouts of America. He also enjoyed reading comic books, and fiction series like 'The Lord of the Rings.' He skipped the first and fifth grades at John J. Bagley Elementary School in Detroit, where he helped two of his classmates learn to read. Reynolds then attended Detroit's Hampton Junior High School for a year before he was transferred to the Friends School of Detroit. He went on to graduate from Cass Technical High School in Detroit in 1979. As a result of his mother's insistence that he attend a university nearby, Reynolds enrolled at Kalamazoo College in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Video Oral History Interview with Christopher P. Reynolds, Section A2017_073_001_003, TRT: 3:29:25 ?

Christopher P. Reynolds attended Kalamazoo College in Kalamazoo, Michigan, where he was one of twelve African American students. In his junior year, Reynolds studied abroad at the University of Strasbourg in Strasbourg, France. He was also awarded the Harry S. Truman Scholarship, which paid for two years of college and graduate school. Although he initially aspired to an academic career in political science, Reynolds was convinced by his parents, Phyllis Todd Graham and Lee Reynolds, Jr., and his father's friend, Judge Corenlus Blackshear, to pursue a law career. Reynolds attended Harvard Law School, where he studied under professors like Duncan Kennedy and Charles Ogletree. After his first year, Reynolds worked at Dykema Gossett PLLC in Detroit, Michigan. There, he was mentored by Kathleen McCree Lewis, who introduced him to Judge Damon J. Keith. The next summer, Reynolds worked at Hughes Hubbard and Reed LLP in New York City. Upon graduating from law school, he began his clerkship with Judge Keith.

Video Oral History Interview with Christopher P. Reynolds, Section A2017_073_001_004, TRT: 4:31:04 ?

Christopher P. Reynolds met his wife, Arlene Ford Reynolds, at Harvard Law School. Upon his graduation in 1986, Reynolds moved to Detroit, Michigan where he clerked for Judge Damon J. Keith, who served the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. During his year-long clerkship, Reynolds also served as the chief of staff for the Commission on the Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution. In 1987, Reynolds joined the aviation liability practice of Hughes Hubbard and Reed LLP in New York City, where he litigated cases for Air

Dominicana. At the firm, he worked with other African American associates, including Amalya Lyle Kearse and W. Burlette Carter; and advocated to end the firm's outings to segregated country clubs. In 1989, he became an assistant U.S. attorney in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York. There, he worked first under U.S. Attorney Otto G. Obermaier, followed by Mary Jo White.

Video Oral History Interview with Christopher P. Reynolds, Section A2017_073_001_005, TRT: 5:31:15 ?

Christopher P. Reynolds served as an assistant U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York from 1989 to 1994. During this period, Reynolds prosecuted a violent drug gang that was based in New York City's Harlem neighborhood. He also encouraged his white colleagues to reconsider their assumptions about African American jurors. When his wife, Arlene Ford Reynolds, became pregnant with their first child, Lovinia Reynolds, Reynolds decided to transition to the private sector. He was eventually convinced by George A. Stohner to work in labor and employment litigation at Morgan, Lewis and Bockius LLP in New York City. In 1998, Reynolds was promoted as a partner of the law firm. Then, in 2007, he joined the in-house counsel of the Toyota Motor Corporation's sales division in Los Angeles, California. Three months into his career there, Reynolds replaced Dian Ogilvie as the company's general counsel.

Video Oral History Interview with Christopher P. Reynolds, Section A2017_073_001_006, TRT: 6:48:08 ?

Christopher P. Reynolds served as the general counsel at the Toyota Motor Corporation from 2007 to 2015. After the company faced scrutiny for a vehicle defect, Reynolds helped prepare the company's president, Akio Toyota, to testify before U.S. Congress. In subsequent years, the company strove to centralize both its business operations and its legal department. Reynolds eventually became the corporation's first African American managing officer, as well as its first global general counsel. Reynolds was promoted as the senior vice president of corporate resources in 2017. In this position, he was responsible for the nine functions of the Toyota Motor Corporation, including the legal, public relations and financial departments. He and his wife, Arlene Ford Reynolds, had three children: Lovinia Reynolds, Austin Reynolds and Melissa Carr-Reynolds. Reynolds reflects upon his upbringing, legacy and hopes and concerns for the African American community. He concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.