

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Randall Robinson

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Robinson, Randall, 1941-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Randall Robinson,
Dates:	August 31, 2017 and June 13, 2017
Bulk Dates:	2017
Physical Description:	12 uncompressed MOV digital video files (6:20:20).
Abstract:	Human rights advocate, author and law professor Randall Robinson (1941 - 2023) was an attorney for the Boston Legal Assistance Project and served as an administrative assistant for Michigan Congressman Charles Diggs. He later founded the TransAfrica Forum and published seven books. Robinson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 31, 2017 and June 13, 2017, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2017_109
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Human rights advocate, author, and law professor Randall Robinson was born on July 6, 1941 in Richmond, Virginia to Maxie Cleveland Robinson and Doris Robinson. He graduated from Armstrong High School in Richmond, Virginia in 1959; attended Norfolk State College in Norfolk, Virginia; and during his junior year, entered the U.S. Army. Robinson earned his B.A. in sociology from Virginia Union University in Richmond, Virginia in 1967, prior to receiving his J.D. degree from Harvard Law School in 1970.

In his final year of law school, Robinson cofounded the Southern Africa Relief Fund, and after graduation, worked as a Ford Foundation fellow in Tanzania, East Africa. Upon his return to the United States, he worked as a civil rights attorney at the Boston Legal Assistance Project until 1975, when he served as speech writer in the office of Missouri Congressman Bill Clay. He worked as a staff attorney for the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights in 1976, prior to serving as administrative assistant, i.e. chief of staff, in the office of Michigan Congressman Charles Diggs.

In 1977, Robinson founded TransAfrica Forum to promote enlightened U.S. policies toward Africa and the Caribbean. He served as the organization's president until 2001, when he and his wife, Hazel, moved to St. Kitts. In 2008, Robinson was named a Distinguished Scholar in Residence by The Pennsylvania State University Dickinson School of Law, where he taught human rights law until 2016.

Robinson was a best-selling author, with his works including *Defending the Spirit: A Black Life in America*; *The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks*; *The Reckoning – What Blacks Owe to Each Other*; *Quitting America: The Departure of a Black Man from His Native Land*; *An Unbroken Agony: Haiti, from Revolution to the Kidnapping of a President*; and two novels: *The Emancipation of Wakefield Clay* and *MAKEDA*.

Some nineteen universities conferred honorary Ph.D.'s upon Robinson in recognition of his work in the area of

social justice advocacy, and he was honored by the United Nations, the Congressional Black Caucus, Harvard University, Essence, ABC News (Person of the Week), The Martin Luther King Center for Non-Violent Change, the NAACP, and Ebony, among others. The Government of South Africa in 2012 conferred upon him the highest honor permissible to a non-citizen of South Africa, in recognition of his efforts to end apartheid. And the Eleanor Roosevelt Center at Val-Kill, New York, named him a 2017 medalist in honor of his work in the area of human rights.

Robinson presented his views and policy recommendations on Nightline, CNN, CBS Evening News, CBS Sunday Morning, Face the Nation, Democracy Now, NPR, NBC Nightly News, ABC's World News Tonight, The Today Show, C-Span, The Tavis Smiley Show, The Charlie Rose Show, and other leading American television programs.

Robinson had two children, Anike Robinson and Jabari Robinson, from his first marriage. He and his wife, Hazel Ross-Robinson, were the parents of one daughter, Khalea Ross Robinson.

Randall Robinson was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on June 13, 2017.

Randall Robinson passed away on March 24, 2023 at the age of 81.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Randall Robinson was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson and Randall Pinkston on August 31, 2017 and June 13, 2017, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 12 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Human rights advocate, author and law professor Randall Robinson (1941 - 2023) was an attorney for the Boston Legal Assistance Project and served as an administrative assistant for Michigan Congressman Charles Diggs. He later founded the TransAfrica Forum and published seven books.

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:

Robinson, Randall, 1941-

Pinkston, Randall (Interviewer)

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Robinson, Randall, 1941---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Human Rights Advocate

Law Professor

Author

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers|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 Randall Robinson, August 31, 2017 and June 13, 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 Randall Robinson, Section A2017_109_001_001, TRT: 1:32:33 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Randall Robinson, Section A2017_109_001_002, TRT: 2:30:49 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Randall Robinson, Section A2017_109_001_003, TRT: 3:39:47 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Randall Robinson, Section A2017_109_001_004, TRT: 4:33:37 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Randall Robinson, Section A2017_109_001_005, TRT: 5:29:11 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Randall Robinson, Section A2017_109_001_006, TRT: 6:29:48 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Randall Robinson, Section A2017_109_002_007, TRT: 7:29:51 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Randall Robinson, Section A2017_109_002_008, TRT: 8:29:53 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Randall Robinson, Section A2017_109_002_009, TRT: 9:29:03 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Randall Robinson, Section A2017_109_002_010, TRT: 10:32:55 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Randall Robinson, Section A2017_109_002_011, TRT: 11:31:31 ?

Video Oral History Interview with Randall Robinson, Section A2017_109_002_012, TRT: 12:31:22 ?