

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Laura Taylor Swain

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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>	Swain, Laura Taylor, 1958-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Laura Taylor Swain,
<b>Dates:</b>	April 12, 2019 and April 28, 2018
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2018 and 2019
<b>Physical Description:</b>	12 uncompressed MOV digital video files (5:19:52).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Judge Laura Taylor Swain (1958 - ) served as a U.S. District Court Judge for the Southern District of New York, beginning in 2000. She was also the first woman, and first person of color, to serve on the New York State Board of Law Examiners. Swain was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 12, 2019 and April 28, 2018, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2018_085
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Judge Laura Taylor Swain was born in 1958 in Brooklyn, New York to Madeline and Justus Taylor. She graduated from Hunter College High School in New York City in 1975; and earned her B.A. degree in government from Harvard-Radcliffe College in 1979, and her J.D. degree from Harvard Law School in 1982.

Upon graduating from law school, Swain clerked for Chief Judge Constance Baker Motley on the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York from 1982 to 1983. Swain then worked as an associate and, later, counsel with New York office of the international law firm Debevoise & Plimpton LLP, where she focused on ERISA, employee benefits, executive compensation and employment law. In 1996, Swain was appointed as a judge of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of New York. In 1998, she became a founding board member of the Coalition for Consumer Bankruptcy Debtor Education, a non-profit organization. Swain was appointed by President Bill Clinton to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York as a U.S. District Judge in 2000. In this role, Swain has presided over numerous high-profile matters, including authorship cases such as *Hoover v. Boncompagni* in 2008 and *Lapine v. Seinfeld* in 2011, and *U.S. v. O'Hara*, the criminal prosecution of several former employees of Bernard L. Madoff Investment Securities. Swain became an adjunct professor at Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law in 2011. In 2017, Chief Justice John Roberts appointed Swain under the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management and Economic Stability Act (PROMESA) to oversee the debt restructuring cases in the Puerto Rican government-debt crisis.

Swain has received numerous awards throughout her legal career, including the Trailblazer Award from the Metropolitan Black Bar Association in 2000, the Servant of Justice Award from the Guild of St. Ives of the Episcopal Diocese of New York in 2008, and the Cecelia H. Goetz Award from the New York Institute of Credit in 2016. She also served as the Donahue Lecturer at Suffolk University Law School in 2003. Swain served on the

New York State Board of Law Examiners from 1986 to 1996, making her the first woman, and the first person of color, to serve in that capacity. She chaired the Advisory Committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States on the Federal Rules of Bankruptcy Procedure between 2007 and 2010. She received an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Suffolk University in Boston, Massachusetts, in 2008. Her article, “Liberty in the Balance: The Role of the Third Branch in a Time of Insecurity” was published in the *Suffolk University Law Review* in 2004.

Judge Laura Taylor Swain was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 28, 2018.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Laura Taylor Swain was conducted by Harriette Cole on April 12, 2019 and April 28, 2018, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 12 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Judge Laura Taylor Swain (1958 - ) served as a U.S. District Court Judge for the Southern District of New York, beginning in 2000. She was also the first woman, and first person of color, to serve on the New York State Board of Law Examiners.

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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:

Swain, Laura Taylor, 1958-

Cole, Harriette (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Swain, Laura Taylor, 1958- --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 Laura Taylor Swain, April 12, 2019 and April 28, 2018. 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).

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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 Laura Taylor Swain, Section A2018\_085\_001\_001, TRT: 1:29:09 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Laura Taylor Swain, Section A2018\_085\_001\_002, TRT: 2:27:44 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Laura Taylor Swain, Section A2018\_085\_001\_003, TRT: 3:29:48 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Laura Taylor Swain, Section A2018\_085\_001\_004, TRT: 4:32:19 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Laura Taylor Swain, Section A2018\_085\_001\_005, TRT: 5:29:36 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Laura Taylor Swain, Section A2018\_085\_001\_006, TRT: 6:09:48 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Laura Taylor Swain, Section A2018\_085\_002\_007, TRT: 7:30:31 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Laura Taylor Swain, Section A2018\_085\_002\_008, TRT: 8:29:00 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Laura Taylor Swain, Section A2018\_085\_002\_009, TRT: 9:29:25 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Laura Taylor Swain, Section A2018\_085\_002\_010, TRT: 10:28:40 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Laura Taylor Swain, Section A2018\_085\_002\_011, TRT: 11:29:07 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Laura Taylor Swain, Section A2018\_085\_002\_012, TRT: 12:14:45 ?