

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Robert L. Wilkins

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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>	Wilkins, Robert Leon, 1963-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Robert L. Wilkins,
<b>Dates:</b>	May 16, 2019
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2019
<b>Physical Description:</b>	10 uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:35:06).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Judge Robert L. Wilkins (1963- ) served as partner of Venable LLP from 2002 to 2010. He was appointed U.S. District Judge for the District of Columbia in 2010, and to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in 2014. Wilkins was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 16, 2019, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2019_038
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Judge Robert L. Wilkins was born on October 2, 1963 in Muncie, Indiana to Joyce Hayes Wilkins and John Wilkins. After graduating from Northside High School, Wilkins received his B.S. degree in chemical engineering from the Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in 1986, and his J.D. degree from Harvard Law School in 1989.

In 1989, Wilkins began his career as a law clerk for the Honorable Earl B. Gilliam of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California. Following his clerkship, Wilkins returned to Indiana to practice law and worked briefly for DeFurVoran. In 1990, he joined the Public Defender Service for the District of Columbia, where he served as a staff attorney in the trial and appellate divisions. In 1996, he was promoted to special litigation chief. From 2002 to 2010, he served as partner of Venable LLP; and, in 2005, he founded the D.C. Access to Justice Commission. Wilkins was appointed U.S. District Judge for the District of Columbia in 2010. In 2014, he was appointed to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.

Wilkins was a member of the American Bar Association, the National Bar Association, and numerous sentencing and juvenile justice related associations. In 2003, Wilkins was a member of the presidential commission that advised President George W. Bush on the establishment of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture; and, in 2016, Wilkins authored *Long Road to Hard Truth: The 100 Year Mission to Create the National Museum of African American History and Culture*.

In 2001, Wilkins was named Pro Bono Attorney of the Year by the American Civil Liberties Union of Maryland, and received the Henry W. Edgerton Civil Liberties Award sponsored by the ACLU Fund of the National Capital Area. In 2008, Wilkins was named one of the 90 Greatest Washington Lawyers of the Last 30 Years by *Legal Times* Journal. In 2014, Wilkins received an honorary doctorate of engineering from Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology and the National Bar Association's Gertrude E. Rush Award. He was also named one of the 40 most

successful litigators under 40 by the *National Law Journal*.

Wilkins was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on May 15, 2019.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Robert L. Wilkins was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on May 16, 2019, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 10 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Judge Robert L. Wilkins (1963- ) served as partner of Venable LLP from 2002 to 2010. He was appointed U.S. District Judge for the District of Columbia in 2010, and to the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in 2014.

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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:

Wilkins, Robert Leon, 1963-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Wilkins, Robert Leon, 1963- --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 Robert L. Wilkins, May 16, 2019.  
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 Robert L. Wilkins, Section  
A2019\_038\_001\_001, TRT: 1:32:31 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Robert L. Wilkins, Section A2019\_038\_001\_002, TRT: 2:30:37 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Robert L. Wilkins, Section A2019\_038\_001\_003, TRT: 3:28:27 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Robert L. Wilkins, Section A2019\_038\_001\_004, TRT: 4:28:30 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Robert L. Wilkins, Section A2019\_038\_001\_005, TRT: 5:30:56 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Robert L. Wilkins, Section A2019\_038\_001\_006, TRT: 6:31:40 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Robert L. Wilkins, Section A2019\_038\_001\_007, TRT: 7:29:39 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Robert L. Wilkins, Section A2019\_038\_001\_008, TRT: 8:30:26 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Robert L. Wilkins, Section A2019\_038\_001\_009, TRT: 9:25:40 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Robert L. Wilkins, Section A2019\_038\_001\_010, TRT: 10:06:40 ?