

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Marilyn Holifield

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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>	Holifield, Marilyn, 1948-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Marilyn Holifield,
<b>Dates:</b>	August 18, 2019
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2019
<b>Physical Description:</b>	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:23:28).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Lawyer Marilyn Holifield (1948- ) was hired as the law firm Holland & Knight's first African American attorney in 1981, and when she made partner in 1986, she became the first black female partner of a major Florida law firm. Holifield was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 18, 2019, in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2019_076
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Lawyer Marilyn Holifield was born in Tallahassee, Florida on June 17, 1948 to Millicent and Bishop Holifield, Sr. She attended Florida A&M University's Lab School, before transferring to Leon High School in 1963, where she was among the first three African Americans to ever attend and graduate from the school in 1965. Holifield then attended Swarthmore College, where she received her B.A. degree in economics with an inaugural concentration in black studies, and was a founding member of the Swarthmore Afro-American Student Society (SASS). In 1972, she graduated from Harvard Law School with her J.D. degree.

From 1972 to 1977, Holifield worked as an assistant counsel for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund in New York City, responsible for litigating class action employment lawsuits in Florida, Alabama, and Missouri, and a major prison reform suit in Georgia. She subsequently served as general counsel for the New York State Division for Youth under Peter Edelman until 1978. Holifield was then hired as a law clerk for the late Appellate Judge Paul Roney of the United States Court of Appeals for the former Fifth Circuit (now Eleventh Circuit) in St. Petersburg, Florida, a role she held until 1980. In 1981, she joined the Holland & Knight law firm in Tampa, Florida as its first African American associate. Holifield was transferred to the Miami office in 1984, and made equity partner on January 1, 1986, becoming the first black female partner of a major Florida law firm. She later became senior partner. Here, her areas of focus included class action litigation and arbitration; labor, employment and benefits; civil rights, discrimination and retaliation; and labor and employment class actions. In 2018, in her capacity as a director for the Miami-Dade North Arts and Humanities Foundation, Holifield began working to establish The Miami Museum of Contemporary Art of the African Diaspora.

Holifield has served on the Harvard University board of overseers, the Swarthmore College board of managers, and the University of Miami board of trustees. She was a co-founding member of the Swarthmore Black Alumni Network, and has served on the executive committee of the Harvard Alumni Association.

She has received numerous awards for her legal work, including Holland & Knight's highest honor, the Chesterfield Smith Award, in 2000. Holifield was also the recipient of the Anti-Defamation League's Jurisprudence Award in 2011, the 2012 National Bar Association's Gertrude E. Rush Award, HistoryMiami's Legal Legend Award in 2014, and the 2019 David W. Dyer Professionalism Award presented by the Dade County Bar Association.

Marilyn Holifield was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on August 18, 2019.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Marilyn Holifield was conducted by Harriette Cole on August 18, 2019, in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Lawyer Marilyn Holifield (1948- ) was hired as the law firm Holland & Knight's first African American attorney in 1981, and when she made partner in 1986, she became the first black female partner of a major Florida law firm.

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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:

Holifield, Marilyn, 1948-

Cole, Harriette (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Holifield, Marilyn, 1948---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:

Lawyer

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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 Marilyn Holifield, August 18, 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 Marilyn Holifield, Section A2019\_076\_001\_001, TRT: 1:30:07 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Marilyn Holifield, Section A2019\_076\_001\_002, TRT: 2:31:42 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Marilyn Holifield, Section A2019\_076\_001\_003, TRT: 3:29:31 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Marilyn Holifield, Section A2019\_076\_001\_004, TRT: 4:29:44 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Marilyn Holifield, Section A2019\_076\_001\_005, TRT: 5:29:10 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Marilyn Holifield, Section A2019\_076\_001\_006, TRT: 6:28:12 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Marilyn Holifield, Section A2019\_076\_001\_007, TRT: 7:25:02 ?