

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Stephen K. Benjamin

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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>	Benjamin, Stephen Keith, 1969-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Stephen K. Benjamin,
<b>Dates:</b>	November 10, 2021
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2021
<b>Physical Description:</b>	10 uncompressed MOV digital video files (5:06:29).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin (1969- ) was the first African American mayor of Columbia, South Carolina, serving three terms, from 2010 through 2021. He served as president of the African American Mayors Association from 2015 to 2016 and as president of the United States Conference of Mayors from 2018 to 2019. Benjamin was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 10, 2021, in Columbia, South Carolina. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2021_008
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin was born on December 1, 1969, in Queens, New York, New York. He received his B.A. degree in political science in 1991 from the University of South Carolina and his J.D. degree in 1994 from the University of South Carolina School of Law, both in Columbia, South Carolina.

Benjamin served as regional manager of public affairs at International Paper Company, manager of corporate affairs at Carolina Power and Light Company, and an associate in the administrative and regulatory practice of the McNair Law Firm in Columbia, South Carolina. In 1999, he was appointed to the cabinet of South Carolina Governor Jim Hodges, where he served through 2003 as director of probation, pardon, and parole services. Benjamin later served as principal of Benjamin Law Firm LLC and, in 2010, was elected the first African American mayor of Columbia, South Carolina. He served as mayor for three terms, through 2021, when he announced that he would not seek reelection. That same year, Benjamin joined The Charleston Group and was named co-chair of the firm's public finance and affordable housing practice.

Benjamin served as president of the African American Mayors Association from 2015 to 2016 and as the 76th president of the United States Conference of Mayors from 2018 to 2019. Benjamin is a member of the FCC's Intergovernmental Advisory Committee, the Accelerator for America Advisory Council, and has served as executive chairman of Municipal Bonds for America, co-chair of the Mayors for 100% Clean Energy campaign, and honorary co-chair of the New Leaders Council. He has served on numerous boards, including those of the Columbia Urban League, Benedict College, and the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce. He also was a founding board member of both the Eau Claire Promise Zone and Choose Children First.

Benjamin has been the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including the 1999 National Bar Association

Young Lawyer of the Year, the 2001 South Carolina Young Lawyer of the Year, and the 2006 South Carolina Bar Association Pro Bono Law Firm of the Year. He was selected as a Liberty Fellow in 2007 and he was named to *The Root's* 100 Influential Black Americans in 2011 and 2013. In 2014, he was named to the *GRIO 100* and received a Triumph Award from the National Action Network as their Public Servant of the Year. Benjamin received the Phoenix Award for Outstanding Contributions to Disaster Recovery by a Public Official from the U.S. Small Business Association in 2016 and was named the Columbia Chamber of Commerce Small and Minority Business Advocate of the Year in 2017. In 2018, he received the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition's Leading Globally Matters Locally Award, Preservation South Carolina's Historic Preservation Elected Official Award, the AIPAC Ralph Bunche Award, and a Distinguished Achievement Award from the Sierra Club.

Benjamin and his wife, DeAndrea Gist Benjamin, live in Columbia, South Carolina, with their two daughters, Bethany and Jordan Grace.

Stephen K. Benjamin was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on November 10, 2021.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Stephen K. Benjamin was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on November 10, 2021, in Columbia, South Carolina, and was recorded on 10 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Mayor Stephen K. Benjamin (1969- ) was the first African American mayor of Columbia, South Carolina, serving three terms, from 2010 through 2021. He served as president of the African American Mayors Association from 2015 to 2016 and as president of the United States Conference of Mayors from 2018 to 2019.

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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:

Benjamin, Stephen Keith, 1969-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Benjamin, Stephen Keith, 1969---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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Columbia (S.C.)

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## Occupations:

Mayor

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

PoliticalMakers

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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 Stephen K. Benjamin, November 10, 2021. 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 Stephen K. Benjamin, Section A2021\_008\_001\_001, TRT: 1:29:04 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Stephen K. Benjamin, Section A2021\_008\_001\_002, TRT: 2:32:15 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Stephen K. Benjamin, Section A2021\_008\_001\_003, TRT: 3:32:13 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Stephen K. Benjamin, Section A2021\_008\_001\_004, TRT: 4:30:00 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Stephen K. Benjamin, Section A2021\_008\_001\_005, TRT: 5:28:20 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Stephen K. Benjamin, Section A2021\_008\_001\_006, TRT: 6:30:45 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Stephen K. Benjamin, Section A2021\_008\_001\_007, TRT: 7:30:19 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Stephen K. Benjamin, Section A2021\_008\_001\_008, TRT: 8:30:00 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Stephen K. Benjamin, Section A2021\_008\_001\_009, TRT: 9:35:46 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Stephen K. Benjamin, Section A2021\_008\_001\_010, TRT: 10:27:47 ?