

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable William H. Murphy, Sr.

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Murphy, William H., Sr., 1917-2003
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable William H. Murphy, Sr.,
Dates:	February 23, 2001
Bulk Dates:	2001
Physical Description:	7 Betacame SP videocassettes (3:15:01).
Abstract:	Civic leader and state court judge The Honorable William H. Murphy, Sr. (1917 - 2003) Murphy won a seat as a judge on the Maryland District Court in 1970. Murphy graduated from Oberlin College in 1939, and then enrolled at the University of Maryland Law School. He was the third African American student enrolled there. Murphy completed his J.D. in 1946 and went into a private practice in Cherry Hill, the working class neighborhood of Baltimore where he and his wife, Madeline, resided. Murphy was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 23, 2001, in Baltimore, Maryland. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2001_052
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Community activist Judge William H. Murphy, Sr., has been a progressive force in Baltimore, Maryland, society for well over a half century. He was born on April 20, 1917, into the Baltimore black elite. However, his life has been spent upholding the rights of the underprivileged. His concern for others came from his parents- both of whom were politically and socially active. In fact, it was his paternal grandfather who founded Baltimore's African American newspaper The Afro-American. His father worked as a high school principal and was also extremely involved in various community organizations, including the NAACP and the Urban League.

After graduation from Oberlin College in 1939, Murphy enrolled at the University of Maryland Law School. He was the third African American student enrolled there. The President of the University even attempted to dissuade Murphy from attending by offering to pay for his tuition and expenses to Harvard Law School. Rejecting this offer, Murphy continued his studies at the University of Maryland Law School for two years, until he was drafted to fight in World War II. He completed his J.D. in 1946 and went into a private practice in Cherry Hill, the working class neighborhood of Baltimore where he and his wife, Madeline, resided. Murphy and his family continued as active members of the Cherry Hill community until 2003.

In 1970, Murphy won a seat on the Maryland District Court, where he continued on as an active retired judge. Murphy was chairman of the board of Provident Hospital and a member of both the Elks and Alpha Phi Alpha. He was also the father of five children. Judge Murphy passed away on May 22, 2003.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable William H. Murphy, Sr. was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on February 23, 2001, in Baltimore, Maryland, and was recorded on 7 Betacame SP videocassettes. Civic leader and state court judge The Honorable William H. Murphy, Sr. (1917 - 2003) Murphy won a seat as a judge on the Maryland District Court in 1970. Murphy graduated from Oberlin College in 1939, and then enrolled at the University of Maryland Law School. He was the third African American student enrolled there. Murphy completed his J.D. in 1946 and went into a private practice in Cherry Hill, the working class neighborhood of Baltimore where he and his wife, Madeline, resided.

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:

Murphy, William H., Sr., 1917-2003

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Bieschke, Paul (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Murphy, William H., Sr., 1917-2003--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Maryland. District Court

Occupations:

Civic Leader

State Court Judge

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 The Honorable William H. Murphy, Sr., February 23, 2001. 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 The Honorable William H. Murphy, Sr., Section

A2001_052_001_001, TRT: 0:30:12 ?

Judge William Murphy details his life in the early 20th century and his family's privileged background during the Jim Crow era. He also details his grandfather, John H. Murphy Sr.'s efforts to start one of the first black newspapers in the country, the Afro American in Baltimore, Maryland. Founded in 1892, he explains how the paper provided the Murphy family with a level of affluence and prominence.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable William H. Murphy, Sr., Section
A2001_052_001_002, TRT: 0:28:20 ?

Judge William H. Murphy details his father's life running the Afro American Newspaper in Baltimore, Maryland

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable William H. Murphy, Sr., Section
A2001_052_001_003, TRT: 0:29:20 ?

Judge William Murphy details his college years at Oberlin College, where he encountered little racial hostility beyond his dean. Murphy was one of the first black students at the University of Maryland school of Law, after a seminal lawsuit, brought by Thurgood Marshall, integrated the program in 1938.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable William H. Murphy, Sr., Section
A2001_052_001_004, TRT: 0:29:05 ?

Judge William H. Murphy describes his life as a lawyer and judge in Maryland during the 1940s and beyond. He reveals the importance of the prestige the family newspaper, the Afro American, had upon his career as a lawyer.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable William H. Murphy, Sr., Section
A2001_052_001_005, TRT: 0:29:47 ?

Judge William Murphy shares several humorous anecdotes about his wife and family and also representing his brother in front of the House Un-American Activities Committee in the 1950s.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable William H. Murphy, Sr., Section
A2001_052_001_006, TRT: 0:29:56 ?

Judge William Murphy opines on the state of the black community, American politics and his legacy.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable William H. Murphy, Sr., Section
A2001_052_001_007, TRT: 0:18:21 ?