

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with H. Patrick Swygert

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Swygert, H. Patrick
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with H. Patrick Swygert,
Dates:	June 2, 2003
Bulk Dates:	2003
Physical Description:	3 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:28:21).
Abstract:	University president H. Patrick Swygert (1943 -) was the president of Howard University for thirteen years. Swygert was formerly president of SUNY-Albany and has taught law at Temple University. Swygert was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 2, 2003, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2003_115
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Born on March 17, 1943, in Philadelphia, to Gustina and Leroy Huzzy, H. Patrick Swygert spent his youth and much of his adult life in his hometown. After high school, Swygert enrolled at Howard University, where he earned his B.A. degree in history in 1965. Swygert remained at Howard for law school, earning his J.D. degree with honors in 1968. Swygert served as an administrative assistant to Representative Charles Rangel before returning to his hometown. In 1972, Swygert received an assistant professorship at Temple University Law School, and later served as acting dean. Swygert then worked as counsel to the U.S. Civil Service Commission for two years prior to returning to Temple University, where he served as special counsel to the university president. Swygert then was hired on as a member of the faculty at Temple University's School of Law. During his career as a professor, Swygert worked abroad several times as a visiting lecturer; he taught law in Israel, Ghana, Egypt, Greece, and Italy, and also collaborated with the Hungarian Ministry of Higher Education.

In 1990, Swygert became president of the State University of New York at Albany and in 1995, Swygert returned to his alma mater, Howard University, to become its president.

Swygert was named Washingtonian of the Year by the *Washingtonian* for his leadership of the Howard University-Fannie Mae LeDroit Park Community Revitalization Project; an initiative that created forty new homes for the university's use. Swygert was also an adept fundraiser for Howard University during his tenure.

In addition to his academic duties, Swygert served as a director of Fannie Mae and the United Technologies Corporation; he also served on the boards of several agencies concerned with community development and minority higher education. President Bill Clinton appointed Swygert as chairman of one of six new branches of Business-LINC (Learning, Information, Networking and Collaboration). Swygert and his wife raised two children.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with H. Patrick Swygert was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on June 2, 2003, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 3 Betacame SP videocassettes. University president H. Patrick Swygert (1943 -) was the president of Howard University for thirteen years. Swygert was formerly president of SUNY-Albany and has taught law at Temple University.

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:

Swygert, H. Patrick

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Swygert, H. Patrick--Interviews

Universities and colleges--Faculty--Interviews

African American educators--Interviews

African American political consultants--Interviews

African American families

African Americans--Genealogy

Courtship

African Americans--Social life and customs

South Philadelphia (Philadelphia, Pa.)

School elections

School music

African American youth

African American young men

Howard University

Garvey, Marcus, 1887-1940

Howard University. School of Law

Ford Foundation

Summer employment

Law clerks

Hastie, William, 1904-1976

Rangel, Charles B.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Howard University

Occupations:

University President

HistoryMakers® Category:

EducationMakers

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 H. Patrick Swygert, June 2, 2003. 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 H. Patrick Swygert, Section A2003_115_001_001, TRT: 0:29:17 ?

H. Patrick Swygert gives details on his mother's past. He goes more in depth about his father's life and speaks about jobs he held and his personality traits. Swygert tells how his parents met and then mentions his siblings, thirteen in all. Swygert states his earliest memory where he talks about his eldest sister and the distant relationship he had with her. He then reminisces about his childhood home in South Philadelphia and describes its meager amenities. Swygert talks about the vibrant music scene on Kater Street, specifically about Pep's Music Bar and the emotions that the music and clientele generated within him. He then describes his personality as a youth and talks about how he adapted some of his parents' character traits. Swygert tells the names of his elementary and middle

schools. He also mentions influential teachers he had. H. Patrick Swygert then explains how he was encouraged by his parents and teaches to excel scholastically.

Universities and colleges--Faculty--Interviews.

African American educators--Interviews.

African American political consultants--Interviews.

African American families.

African Americans--Genealogy.

Courtship.

African Americans--Social life and customs.

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African American youth.

African American young men.

Howard University.

Garvey, Marcus, 1887-1940.

Howard University. School of Law.

Ford Foundation.

Summer employment.

Law clerks.

Hastie, William, 1904-1976.

Rangel, Charles B.

Video Oral History Interview with H. Patrick Swygert, Section A2003_115_001_002, TRT: 0:30:20
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H. Patrick Swygert recalls when he ran for junior high class president and won. Then he explains how music affected his childhood. He mentions some musicians he grew up with who went on to achieve notoriety and also talks about his own musicianship. Swygert goes on to describe the different ways he was influenced by various cultural groups while growing up in South Philadelphia. He discusses his initial plans to go to the U.S. Marine Corps upon graduating from high school. Swygert then explains how one of his high school teachers led him to change his mind and attend Howard University. He talks about his early impressions of Washington, D.C. Swygert describes how he dealt with his father's death and kept his wits while attending college. He then tells of his wish to go back to his youth and revisit Pep's Music Bar and to see and hear what he experienced while growing up. Then, he tells of influential people he's met through Howard University. H. Patrick Swygert explains the social climate on campus at Howard University in the early 1960s.

Video Oral History Interview with H. Patrick Swygert, Section A2003_115_001_003, TRT: 0:28:44
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H. Patrick Swygert talks about influential professors and colleagues, citing their names and associations. He then explains how he was excited by the idea of law school because of the social and political issues that surrounded the studies. Swygert then goes in depth as he tells about his interest in and research of Marcus Garvey. He discusses his first year at Howard University School of Law and his pursuit to be involved in civil rights law and then names some memorable professors he studied under there. Swygert explains how the Ford

Foundation has contributed to Howard University School of Law. Then he mentions some of the summer jobs he held during his days at law school. Swygert discusses his experience as a law clerk to Chief Judge William Henry Hastie and also gives details of Hastie's career. From there he went on to work for the Debevoise, Plimpton, Lyons, and Gates law firm and talks about his experiences there. Next he explains his relationship with U.S. Congressman Charles Rangel and how the two of them moved through the ranks together. Swygert then mentions some politicians he met in New York during that time.