

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Clarence Mitchell, III

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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>	Mitchell, Clarence, III, 1939-2012
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Clarence Mitchell, III,
<b>Dates:</b>	August 6, 2004 and June 11, 2004
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2004
<b>Physical Description:</b>	9 Betacame SP videocassettes (4:33:16).
<b>Abstract:</b>	State senator The Honorable Clarence Mitchell, III (1939 - 2012 ) was involved in the creation of the Maryland Office of Minority Business Enterprise and Maryland's first Fair Employment Bill. He served as a special advisor to Presidents John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Jimmy Carter and Vice President Hubert Humphrey. He is currently the president and CEO of Vanguard, Inc., an international government affairs, public relations, and business development consulting company. Mitchell was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 6, 2004 and June 11, 2004, in Baltimore, Maryland and Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2004_071
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Former state Senator Clarence M. Mitchell III was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, on December 14, 1939. A member of the illustrious Mitchell family of Baltimore, Mitchell grew up in Baltimore, attending the city's public schools. After graduating from Gonzaga High School, Mitchell attended the University of Maryland and Morgan State University, earning his J.D. degree from the University of Baltimore Law School.

Coming from a family well known for their commitment to advocacy, Mitchell was a cofounder of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in 1960; he also worked closely with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In 1963, Mitchell was elected to the Maryland House of Delegates, where he served until 1967; that year, he became the youngest person to serve in the Maryland State Senate. Mitchell remained in the Maryland Senate for nearly two decades, finally stepping down in 1986. While in the State Senate, Mitchell served as the deputy majority leader; the majority whip; the chairman of the executive nominations committee; the co-chair of the joint committee on federal relations; and was a member of the judicial proceedings committee. Mitchell also served as the president of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators from 1979 to 1981.

During his time in office, Mitchell was involved in a number of legislative achievements, including the creation of the Maryland Office of Minority Business Enterprise, and Maryland's first Fair Employment Bill, which he sponsored. Mitchell served as a special advisor to Presidents John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Jimmy Carter, and Vice President Hubert Humphrey; he also served as a delegate to the Democratic National Conventions in 1964, 1968, 1976, 1980 and 1984.

Mitchell went on to become the president and CEO of Vanguard, Inc., an international government affairs, public relations, and business development consulting company; he also co-founded and served as chairman of the Center for the Study of Harassment of African Americans.

Hon. Clarence Mitchell passed away on October 10, 2012.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Clarence Mitchell, III was conducted by Larry Crowe on August 6, 2004 and June 11, 2004, in Baltimore, Maryland and Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 9 Betacame SP videocassettes. State senator The Honorable Clarence Mitchell, III (1939 - 2012 ) was involved in the creation of the Maryland Office of Minority Business Enterprise and Maryland's first Fair Employment Bill. He served as a special advisor to Presidents John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Jimmy Carter and Vice President Hubert Humphrey. He is currently the president and CEO of Vanguard, Inc., an international government affairs, public relations, and business development consulting company.

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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:

Mitchell, Clarence, III, 1939-2012

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Lane, Edgar Carey (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Mitchell, Clarence, III, 1939-2012--Interviews

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African American state legislators--Maryland--Interviews

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Government consultants--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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Maryland

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**Occupations:**

State Senator

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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 Clarence Mitchell, III, August 6, 2004 and June 11, 2004. 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 Clarence Mitchell, III, Section  
A2004\_071\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:36 ?

African American state legislators--Maryland--Interviews

Government consultants--Interviews

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Clarence Mitchell, III, Section  
A2004\_071\_001\_002, TRT: 0:30:58 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Clarence Mitchell, III, Section  
A2004\_071\_001\_003, TRT: 0:30:11 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Clarence Mitchell, III, Section  
A2004\_071\_001\_004, TRT: 0:30:50 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Clarence Mitchell, III, Section  
A2004\_071\_002\_005, TRT: 0:30:01 ?

The Honorable Clarence Mitchell III was born on December 14, 1939 in St. Paul, Minnesota. His mother, Juanita Elizabeth Jackson Mitchell, was born in 1913 in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Mitchell's maternal grandmother, Lillie Mae Carroll Jackson, was descended from the son of Charles Carroll, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Mitchell's grandmother became a prominent civil rights leader after a brush with death inspired her to serve her community. She was recruited by Carl J. Murphy of The Afro to head the Baltimore, Maryland branch of the NAACP. Mitchell's grandfather left Mississippi and made a living traveling around the South filming communities, showing movies and giving performances that featured the whole family, including Mitchell's mother. Mitchell's family became known for their political work and commitment to the community. He recalls the impressive organizing work his grandmother accomplished, and he regrets the lack of grassroots organizing that he sees in black politics today.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Clarence Mitchell, III, Section  
A2004\_071\_002\_006, TRT: 0:30:28 ?

The Honorable Clarence Mitchell III's mother graduated from Frederick Douglass High School in Baltimore, Maryland at the age of fourteen and earned her master's from the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia at nineteen. She formed the NAACP Youth and College Division and earned a law degree from the University of Maryland. Her legal practice focused on constitutional law. She worked with Thurgood Marshall and HistoryMaker Oliver W. Hill on civil rights cases. Mitchell's father, Clarence Maurice Mitchell, Jr., was born in Baltimore in 1911 into a poor family. He attended Lincoln University in Pennsylvania on an athletic scholarship, then worked as a reporter for The Afro where he covered the Armwood Lynching. He moved the family to St. Paul, Minnesota to work for the Urban League. After returning to Baltimore, he headed the Washington D.C. branch of the NAACP. As a youth, Mitchell learned an important political lesson about connecting with people from family friend, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Clarence Mitchell, III, Section

A2004\_071\_002\_007, TRT: 0:29:33 ?

The Honorable Clarence Mitchell III grew up with a legacy of political leadership and loyalty instilled by his father, Clarence Maurice Mitchell, Jr. His father was friends with Thurgood Marshall, worked with other prominent NAACP members and was nicknamed the “101st senator” due to his influence with the U.S. Congress. Mitchell recalls attending various civil rights demonstrations as a child and grew up immersed in the movement. Due to restrictive covenants, his neighborhood in Baltimore, Maryland was comprised of a mix of poor, middle-class and wealthy African Americans. He attended Henry Highland Garnet Elementary School and Booker T. Washington Junior High School in Baltimore, then his parents sent him to Gonzaga College High School in Washington, D.C. for a better quality of education. His experience of watching people in his neighborhood strive for something better gave him an appreciation of how political power is gained by forming strong organizations and advancing mutual interests.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Clarence Mitchell, III, Section  
A2004\_071\_002\_008, TRT: 0:29:41 ?

The Honorable Clarence Mitchell III attended University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland briefly before transferring to Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland. At Morgan State he participated in athletics and became a student leader in the Civil Rights Movement. In 1960, he traveled to Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina for the founding SNCC conference attended by HistoryMakers Julian Bond and Marion Barry, who became the first SNCC chairman, and Ella Baker who served as a mentor for young people in the movement. While Mitchell was treasure of SNCC working on voter registration in the South, he continued to protest for civil rights in Baltimore. He left SNCC to begin his political career. In 1962, twenty-two year-old Mitchell was elected to the Maryland House of Delegates. While attending the swearing-in ceremony in Annapolis, his brother HistoryMaker Michael Mitchell, Sr. was assaulted by segregationists. Mitchell recalls the organizing that led to the March on Washington in 1963.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Clarence Mitchell, III, Section  
A2004\_071\_002\_009, TRT: 0:30:58 ?

The Honorable Clarence Mitchell III organized student protests in Baltimore, Maryland during the Freedom Summer of 1964 and used his position as an elected official to investigate the charges that were brought against those involved in the Selma to Montgomery March in 1965. Mitchell traveled to Atlanta, Georgia to help Maynard Jackson organize his first run for political office and served as a political consultant to other black politicians. In 1979, he helped found the National Black Caucus of State Legislators where he served as president for several terms and was able to have a strong impact at a local level. Mitchell points to the need to counteract disenfranchisement and prevent a recurrence of the 2000 presidential election. He describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community and credits HistoryMakers Dorothy Height and Louis Farrakhan for their ability to mobilize large segments of the African American community.