

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Marvin S. Arrington, Sr.

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Arrington, Marvin S.
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Marvin S. Arrington, Sr.,
Dates:	February 25, 2008 and March 18, 2006
Bulk Dates:	2006 and 2008
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:16:49).
Abstract:	Superior court judge and city council member The Honorable Marvin S. Arrington, Sr. (1941 -) is a senior partner in the Arrington and Hollowell Law Firm, and a judge in the Fulton County Superior Court. Arrington was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 25, 2008 and March 18, 2006, in Atlanta, Georgia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2006_041
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Marvin S. Arrington, Sr. was born February 10, 1941 in Atlanta, Georgia to George Robert and Maggie Andrews Arrington. After graduating from Henry McNeal Turner High School in 1959, he entered Clark Atlanta University on a football scholarship and earned his B.A. degree in 1963. After a year at Howard University School of Law, Arrington transferred to Emory University School of Law and earned his J.D. degree in 1967.

In 1969, he and Maynard Jackson were elected to the Atlanta Board of Aldermen, a precursor to Atlanta's City Council. Four years later, Jackson would defeat incumbent Mayor Sam Massell and become the first African American to be elected mayor of a large southern city. In 1980, Arrington would be elected president of the City Council and would serve in that capacity until he stepped down in 1997 to unsuccessfully run for mayor of Atlanta.

During his service on the City Council, Arrington introduced legislation to support federal prohibitions against housing discrimination and he ensured aggressive enforcement of state and federal housing laws designated to stabilize transitional neighborhoods. Arrington spearheaded Atlanta's efforts to include minority-owned banks as equal partners with other participating banks. He worked with Georgia Senator Leroy Johnson to pave the way for Atlanta to host the return of Muhammed Ali to the ring after his four-year ban from boxing for draft avoidance. Arrington appointed the first woman to chair the city council's powerful finance committee and he championed the retention and proper funding of Zoo Atlanta. He initiated measures to require that all city council and standing committee meetings be recorded and kept on file by the city clerk. Arrington used the buildup for the 1996 Atlanta Olympics to convert run down public housing projects to upgraded housing. He coordinated the funding for erection of the statute of Hank Aaron, which stands at the entrance of Turner Field.

A senior partner in the Arrington and Hollowell law firm, he was appointed, in 2002, as a Fulton County Superior Court Judge by then - governor, Roy Barnes.

Arrington serves on the board of trustees of Clark Atlanta University and Emory University Law School and he has been awarded an honorary doctorate from Clark Atlanta University. He is a member of the National Bar Association; American Bar Association; State Bar of Georgia; Lawyers Club, Gate City Bar Association Hall of Fame and Kiwanis International. A member of Big Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Arrington is the father of two adult children who are also lawyers.

Arrington was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 18, 2006.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Marvin S. Arrington, Sr. was conducted by Denise Gines and Ed Anderson on February 25, 2008 and March 18, 2006, in Atlanta, Georgia, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Superior court judge and city council member The Honorable Marvin S. Arrington, Sr. (1941 -) is a senior partner in the Arrington and Hollowell Law Firm, and a judge in the Fulton County Superior Court.

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:

Arrington, Marvin S.

Anderson, Ed (Interviewer)

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Arrington, Marvin S.--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Fulton County (Ga.)

Occupations:

Superior Court Judge

HistoryMakers® Category:

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 Marvin S. Arrington, Sr., February 25, 2008 and March 18, 2006. 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 Marvin S. Arrington, Sr., Section A2006_041_001_001, TRT: 0:28:20 ?

The Honorable Marvin S. Arrington, Sr. was born on February 10, 1941 to Maggie Andrews Arrington and George Arrington in Atlanta, Georgia. His mother spent her early childhood in Milledgeville, Georgia, where her parents managed a grocery store in the back of their home, before moving to Atlanta's Pittsburgh neighborhood. She completed tenth grade at Booker T. Washington High School and later worked as a domestic. Arrington's father was born in Chipley, Georgia, although he grew up in Atlanta's Summerhill area. Arrington attended segregated schools, including Henry McNeal Turner High School with Mack Jones and Allen Smith. Arrington reflects upon his childhood and the importance of education to his family. He also describes his maternal family reunions, hosted throughout the country, and his surname's possible Virginian roots. He recalls instances of police brutality in the South, including when his father was wrongly accused of insulting a white woman whose husband was a police officer.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Marvin S. Arrington, Sr., Section A2006_041_001_002, TRT: 0:30:10 ?

The Honorable Marvin S. Arrington, Sr.'s family moved from Atlanta's Summerhill neighborhood to Grady Homes, and frequented Lindsay Street Baptist Church. He attended E.R. Carter Elementary School, English Avenue School and A.F. Herndon Elementary School in Atlanta. At Henry McNeal Turner High School, he was quarterback on the football team. In 1959, his graduating class included Hamilton Holmes and Charlayne Hunter-Gault, who integrated the University of Georgia. A hard worker, he received an athletic scholarship to Clark University. There, following events of the Civil Rights Movement, such as demonstrations led by Lonnice C. King, Jr., he developed an interest in law. In 1961, while working briefly as a waiter on the Union Pacific Railroad, he learned to cook. He describes instances of segregation that he experienced in Atlanta, even as a Fulton County judge. He also talks about Henry McNeal Turner, for whom his high school was named, and Vernon Johns. Arrington had four siblings and one half-brother.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Marvin S. Arrington, Sr., Section A2006_041_001_003, TRT: 0:28:20 ?

The Honorable Marvin S. Arrington, Sr. played football at Atlanta's Clark University at the time of the Civil Rights Movement, graduating in 1964. He recalls the deaths of prominent leaders like President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Malcolm X and Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. He describes Auburn Avenue's entertainment and business scene, as well as its decline. He explains the significance of the Butler Street YMCA, including Warren Cochran's leadership, for the black community, and the impact of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. He completed one year at Howard University School of Law in Washington, D.C. before transferring with Clarence Cooper to Emory University School of Law in Atlanta, Georgia. As one of Emory's first black law graduates, Arrington befriended his mostly white peers. In 1967, Arrington passed Georgia's bar exam and became an associate at the law firm of Kleiner, Herman,

Deville and Simmons. Arrington attended the first anniversary of the March on Washington with his son.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Marvin S. Arrington, Sr., Section A2006_041_001_004, TRT: 0:30:30 ?

The Honorable Marvin S. Arrington, Sr. attended Howard University School of Law upon the advice of his brother and Ben Brown. After a year, he transferred to Emory University School of Law, where he clerked for Senator Leroy R. Johnson, who taught him about the power of the law. Upon graduating, Arrington monitored government poverty programs in South Carolina, then passed the state bar exam. He worked for Kleiner, Herman, Deville and Simmons, then established a law firm with S. Richard Rubin. In 1969, he ran successfully for Atlanta City Council's Board of Aldermen. One of five black aldermen at the time, he sponsored legislation to desegregate Atlanta City Hall's water fountains and Atlanta Water Works' dressing rooms. He also co-sponsored legislation to allow Muhammad Ali to box in Atlanta. Arrington and ACLU brought a discrimination suit against the State Bar of Georgia in 1970. He recalls Charles Hamilton Houston, Lonnie C. King, Jr., Benjamin Mays and the impact of Maynard Jackson's mayoral election.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Marvin S. Arrington, Sr., Section A2006_041_002_005, TRT: 0:19:29 ?