

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Nathaniel R. Jones

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Jones, Nathaniel R., 1926-2020
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Nathaniel R. Jones,
Dates:	March 23, 2006
Bulk Dates:	2006
Physical Description:	3 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:30:13).
Abstract:	Association general counsel and federal circuit court judge The Honorable Nathaniel R. Jones (1926 - 2020) is a retired United States Circuit Court Judge, and has served as executive director of the Fair Employment Practices Commission. He has also served as a United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio, and former general counsel for the NAACP. Jones was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 23, 2006, in Cincinnati, Ohio. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2006_050
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Retired United States Circuit Court Judge and General Counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Nathaniel R. Jones was born on May 13, 1926 in Youngstown, Ohio. The son of Virginians, Lillian Brown Jones and Nathaniel Bacon Jones, he attended Westside School and Grant Junior High School. Black publisher J. Maynard Dickerson, owner of the activist *Buckeye Review*, mentored Jones, who wrote for the column, "Sports Shorts," before graduating from South High School. Drafted in 1945, Jones served in the United States Army Air Corps in Dayton, where Dickerson introduced him to NAACP activists Mylie Williamson, James H. McGhee and F. Leon Higginbotham. After his discharge in 1947, he was introduced to Walter White, NAACP executive secretary. Jones earned an A.B. degree from Youngstown State University in 1951 and an LL.B. degree from Youngstown State University Law School in 1956.

Admitted to the bar in 1957, Jones, after four years of private practice, served as executive director of the Fair Employment Practices Commission and in 1960 was appointed by Attorney General Robert Kennedy as United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio in Cleveland. In 1967, Jones was appointed Assistant General Counsel to President Johnson's National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders (the Kerner Commission). Briefly returning to private practice, Jones was asked by NAACP executive director, Roy Wilkins, to serve as NAACP general counsel in 1969. For the next ten years, he argued several cases before the United States Supreme Court and led national efforts to end school segregation and to defend affirmative action. Jones investigated discrimination in the armed forces and successfully coordinated the NAACP's First Amendment defense in the Mississippi Boycott Case. Jones was nominated by President Carter to the United States Court of Appeals in 1979 to which he became Senior Judge. He retired from the bench in 2002.

Currently a senior partner with Blank and Rome LLP, Jones has published widely and built a distinguished community record. He taught law at the University of Cincinnati College of Law, North Carolina Central University College of Law and Harvard University Law School. In 1993, Jones served as part of a team of observers for the first democratic elections in South Africa. Recipient of scores of awards, Jones is married to the former Lillian Hawthorne and has four grown children.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Nathaniel R. Jones was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 23, 2006, in Cincinnati, Ohio, and was recorded on 3 Betacame SP videocassettes. Association general counsel and federal circuit court judge The Honorable Nathaniel R. Jones (1926 - 2020) is a retired United States Circuit Court Judge, and has served as executive director of the Fair Employment Practices Commission. He has also served as a United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio, and former general counsel for the NAACP.

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:

Jones, Nathaniel R., 1926-2020

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Jones, Nathaniel R., 1926-2020 --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

United States. Court of Appeals (6th Circuit)

Occupations:

Federal Circuit 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 Nathaniel R. Jones, March 23, 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 Nathaniel R. Jones, Section
A2006_050_001_001, TRT: 0:30:05 ?

The Honorable Nathaniel R. Jones was born on May 13, 1926 in Youngstown, Ohio to Lillian Brown Rafe and Nathaniel Jones. His maternal great grandmother was born to a slave and white owner, and his paternal grandfather was a slave in Virginia. Jones' mother was born in Big Island, Virginia in 1900 to Ellen Sledd Brown and Joseph Brown. Jones' maternal grandmother was Native American, African and white. She worked as a domestic, and her husband was a farmer and lumbermen. His father was born in Lynchburg, Virginia in 1898. Both of Jones' parents had an elementary school education. His father worked as a farmer and lumberman in Virginia. Jones' parents met through their church and left Virginia just before his birth. In Ohio, his father was a janitor and steel worker, while his mother worked for J.R. Watkins Medical Company and a movie theater. His parents divorced when he was ten years old. His mother remarried, and Jones lived with his father. Jones describes his parents' personalities and who he takes after.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Nathaniel R. Jones, Section
A2006_050_001_002, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

The Honorable Nathaniel R. Jones' parents moved to Youngstown, Ohio in the early 1920s to work in the steel mills. Jones describes the history of Youngstown and the large migration of African Americans and Europeans that occurred in the early 20th century. This migration created a diverse community in Youngstown with both racial tensions and integration. During the Great Depression, his mother worked at the Buckeye Review and as a laundress, while his father was employed as a steelworker and janitor. Jones recalls delivering laundry, cleaning movie theaters, soot from the steel mills and the Works Progress Administration paving his street. He was a member of the Third Baptist Church, which was his social and religious center. Jones attended West Side School and James Hillman Junior High School. While both schools were integrated, their staffs were all white, and there were few black students. Jones worked at the Buckeye Review after meeting the owner, J. Maynard Dickerson, at a reception for the YMCA.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Nathaniel R. Jones, Section
A2006_050_001_003, TRT: 0:30:08 ?

The Honorable Nathaniel R. Jones visited J. Maynard Dickerson's Buckeye Review print shop to watch him run the printing press, and heard notable speakers like Thurgood Marshall at Dickerson's home. In the eighth grade, Jones began writing Sports Shorts, a column for the Buckeye Review. Jones remembers his first article, and reading black newspapers from around the country. At South High School in Youngstown, Ohio, Jones was an average student, a football player and the first African American manager of the basketball team. Jones worked at the Buckeye Review through high school and college. He wrote, printed and delivered the paper each week. Jones covered Ohio's major sports teams and met famous players, including Satchel Paige. He was drafted into the U.S. Army Air Corps and stationed at the Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita County, Texas and Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. After his discharge in 1947, Jones attended Youngstown State University and served as president of its NAACP chapter.