

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Wendell Holland

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Holland, Wendell, 1952-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Wendell Holland,
Dates:	May 24, 2012
Bulk Dates:	2012
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:09:54).
Abstract:	Lawyer Wendell Holland (1952 -) was the chairman of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, and played a leading role in the privatization of public utilities in the United States. Holland was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 24, 2012, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2012_128
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Attorney Wendell Holland was born on February 10, 1952 and raised in Ardmore, a community in Lower Merion Township in Pennsylvania. His parents are Jeremiah William, Sr. and Jane Foster Holland. Holland attended Lower Merion High School. He then attended Fordham University on a full basketball scholarship, graduating in 1974 with a B.S. degree in urban studies and psychology. He also attended Rutgers School of Law, where he was class president.

In time, he specialized in energy and utility regulation, and worked with the New York Public Service Commission and the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC). He served as a judge and in 1990 was appointed as commissioner of PUC. After practicing law and serving as a corporate executive, he became chairman of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission in 2004 where he was responsible for deciding utility mergers and acquisitions; for the implementation of legislation that triggered comprehensive and substantial changes to renewable energy; telecommunication reform; and consumer services legislation.

Holland also served as vice president and general counsel of the Global Bioscience Development Institute. In 2002 and 2003 respectively, Holland was appointed to coordinate the City of Philadelphia Trade Missions with China and South Africa.

Holland has served on three public company boards. He was elected to the board of directors for Aqua America, Inc. in 2011. He was also named to the board of trustees for Main Line Health Inc. in 2012. Holland was also the 1994 recipient of the annual award for excellence for the National Association of Water Companies, Pennsylvania chapter. He was named one of Philadelphia's 100 Most Influential African Americans. In 2007, he became the recipient of the Whitney M. Young, Jr. Service Award for the Cradle of Liberty Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Holland has served as president of the Mid-Atlantic Conference of Regulatory Utility Commissions and the Organization of PJM States. In 2007, he was the treasurer of the National Association of Regulatory Utility

Commissioners (NARUC), where he also served on the board of directors and as chairman of its audit and investment committees. Holland is married to Anita Persaud Holland, and they have three children.

Wendell Holland was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on May 24, 2012.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Wendell Holland was conducted by Larry Crowe on May 24, 2012, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Lawyer Wendell Holland (1952 -) was the chairman of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, and played a leading role in the privatization of public utilities in the United States.

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:

Holland, Wendell, 1952-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Holland, Wendell, 1952- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Lawyer

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 Wendell Holland, May 24, 2012. 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 Wendell Holland, Section A2012_128_001_001, TRT: 1:29:55 ?
Wendell Holland was born on February 10, 1952 in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania to Jane Foster Holland and Jeremiah Holland, Sr. His paternal great-grandfather,

Cyrus Holland, was born a slave on the plantation of John Holland. After being freed in 1827, he married Cotta Holland and settled in Sussex County, Delaware. Holland's grandfather, Jeremiah M. Holland, was an oyster farmer and African Methodist Episcopal minister, and was affiliated with Wilberforce University during its early years. Holland's maternal great-grandfather was born to a Native American mother and African American father, who were enslaved on a tobacco plantation in Martinsville, Virginia. There, Holland's maternal grandfather, John Foster, became a railroad laborer. Holland's mother attended the all-black Piedmont Christian Institute in Martinsville before moving to the Main Line area outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Holland grew up in Ardmore, Pennsylvania, which was a predominantly African American area of the majority-white Main Line.

Video Oral History Interview with Wendell Holland, Section A2012_128_001_002, TRT: 2:30:28 ?

Wendell Holland attended the all-black Ardmore Avenue School in Ardmore, Pennsylvania. The school had outdated facilities and a disinterested white teaching staff, and so the local NAACP chapter began advocating for school integration in 1963. They were successful; and, from that time, Holland and his peers were bused to the Wynnewood Road School in Ardmore, where there were previously two African American students. Holland initially struggled to adjust to the majority-white environment, but soon made friends because of his athletic prowess in football, track and basketball. During Holland's childhood, the local school district and nearby Villanova University produced a number of All-American athletes, including Emlen Tunnell, Wilt Chamberlain and Howard Porter. They visited Ardmore to practice and socialize, and Holland spent the summers playing pickup basketball games with them. He also attended the annual Penn Relay Carnival at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Video Oral History Interview with Wendell Holland, Section A2012_128_001_003, TRT: 3:30:46 ?

Wendell Holland attended the newly integrated Wynnewood Road School in Ardmore, Pennsylvania, where he excelled as an athlete and served as the vice president of his class. He continued to be successful at Ardmore Junior High School, where he was elected class president and played on the school's football, track and basketball teams. On one occasion, Holland and several of his friends were briefly suspended for stealing sodas from the teachers' lounge. Holland and his family attended the Bethel A.M.E. Church in Ardmore, where he was a member of the Boys Scout troop. During this time, Holland was influenced by local community leaders like Vernon V. Young, who inspired many young athletes in the area. Holland went on to attend Lower Merion High School, where he became involved in the Black Power movement. He was instrumental in leading a sit-in protest against the teachers' poor treatment of the school's African American students.

Video Oral History Interview with Wendell Holland, Section A2012_128_001_004, TRT: 4:14:05 ?

Wendell Holland attended Lower Merion High School in Ardmore, Pennsylvania, where he participated in a number of civil rights demonstrations. Following the assassination of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968, Holland helped organize a walk out protest and march on Montgomery Avenue in Ardmore. Around this time, he began to question the patriotism that he was taught in school, and became interested in the Black Power movement, which was gaining prominence. At this point in the interview, Holland talks about the significance of natural hair to the movement, and remembers the impact of integration on black athletes. During his senior year, Holland was heavily recruited by university basketball teams, and received multiple offers of athletic

scholarships. Upon graduating in 1970, he was convinced by Coach Digger Phelps to attend Fordham University in New York City because of the basketball team's affiliation with the New York Knicks.

Video Oral History Interview with Wendell Holland, Section A2012_128_001_005, TRT: 5:29:59 ?

Wendell Holland received an athletic scholarship to attend Fordham University in New York City. There, his interest in civil rights and politics led him to major in urban studies and psychology. During his freshman year, Holland and his basketball teammates reached the East Regional Semifinals under the guidance of Coach Digger Phelps, making them the eighth ranked team in the nation. Many of their games took place in New York City's Madison Square Garden, where the New York Knicks also played. During this time, Holland met his future wife, Anita Persaud Holland. After graduating in 1974, he went on to the Rutgers School of Law in Newark, New Jersey, where he joined the Black American Law Students Association. Upon receiving his J.D. degree, Holland briefly worked in Florida for the Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc. In 1980, he returned to his hometown of Ardmore, Pennsylvania to become an attorney at the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, where he became a commissioner in 1990.

Video Oral History Interview with Wendell Holland, Section A2012_128_001_006, TRT: 6:29:40 ?

Wendell Holland received a state judicial appointment in 1988. He decided Pennsylvania's energy regulation cases until 1990, when he became a state commissioner for the regulation of public utilities. That same year, he became the first African American to join the board of directors of Allegheny Energy, Inc. In 1993, Holland became the chairman of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission. There, he regulated the rates and services of the local public utilities, and created trade partnerships with seven countries, including China. Also in 1993, Holland helped write the treaty for the Southern African Power Pool on behalf of the Southern African Development Community. He was invited to attend the inauguration of South African President Nelson Mandela in 1994. Holland then worked for several law firms, including Obermayer Rebmann Maxwell and Hippel LLP and Saul Ewing Arnstein and Lehr LLP. He also served on a number of nonprofit boards, and was honored by the Cradle of Liberty Council in 2007.

Video Oral History Interview with Wendell Holland, Section A2012_128_001_007, TRT: 7:25:01 ?

Wendell Holland specialized in the privatization and regulation of public utilities, both in the United States and globally. In 1977, Holland married Anita Persaud Holland, with whom he had three children. Holland describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community, and reflects upon his life, legacy and how he would like to be remembered. He concludes the interview by narrating his photographs.