

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Barbara Lee

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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>	Lee, Barbara, 1946-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Barbara Lee,
<b>Dates:</b>	November 5, 2013
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2013
<b>Physical Description:</b>	4 uncompressed MOV digital video files (1:54:38).
<b>Abstract:</b>	U.S. congresswoman and state senator The Honorable Barbara Lee (1946 - ) was the first woman to represent the State of California's then-9th and now-13th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives. Lee was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 5, 2013, in Oakland, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2013_249
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

U.S. Congresswoman Honorable Barbara Lee was born on July 16, 1946 in El Paso, Texas. Her biological father, James Lewis, was a veteran of the Korean War; her mother, Mildred Massey, a clerk. In 1960, Lee's family moved to the San Fernando Valley in Los Angeles, California. As a teenager, she immersed herself in music and won two music achievement awards from the Rotary Club and the Bank of America. Lee graduated from San Fernando High School in 1964. She worked for one year in the California Department of Labor Statistics, and then went on to receive her B.A. degree in psychology from Mills College in 1973 and her M.A. degree in social work from the University of California at Berkeley in 1975.

Upon graduation, Lee worked for Congressman Ronald V. Dellums after serving as a legislative intern there during graduate school. While there, she managed Congressman Dellums' offices in Washington, D.C. and Oakland, California for eleven years and eventually rose to the position of senior adviser. In 1990, Lee was elected to the California State Assembly; and, in 1996, she was elected to the California State Senate. As a Democrat, she worked successfully with California's Republican administration in those years and sponsored sixty-seven bills that were signed into law by then-Republican Governor Pete Wilson. Lee's political agenda focused on issues such as education, public safety, environmental protection, health, labor, and women's rights. In 1998, she became the first woman to represent the State of California's then-9th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives and served as chair of the Congressional Black Caucus from 2009 to 2011. She was later elected as the first woman to represent the California's now-13th Congressional District in 2013. Lee also published a memoir, *Renegade for Peace and Justice: A Memoir of Political and Personal Courage* (2008).

Lee's honors and distinctions include receiving the Dean's Appreciation Award from the University of California at Berkeley School of Social Welfare, and the Willie L. Brown, Jr., Leadership Award, both in 2001. Lee was also nominated for the Alfred R. Nobel Peace Prize. In 2009, The National Urban League honored her with the Congressional Leadership Award; and, in 2012, she received the Lifetime Legacy Achievement Award from the

United Nations Association. Lee is the mother of two sons, Tony Lee and Craig Lee.

U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Lee was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on November 5, 2013.

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# Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Barbara Lee was conducted by Larry Crowe on November 5, 2013, in Oakland, California, and was recorded on 4 uncompressed MOV digital video files. U.S. congresswoman and state senator The Honorable Barbara Lee (1946 - ) was the first woman to represent the State of California's then-9th and now-13th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives.

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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:

Lee, Barbara, 1946-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Lee, Barbara, 1946---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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## Occupations:

U.S. Congresswoman

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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 Barbara Lee, November 5, 2013. 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 Barbara Lee, Section A2013\_249\_001\_001, TRT: 1:28:43 ?

The Honorable Barbara Lee was born on July 16, 1946 in El Paso, Texas to Mildred Parish Massey and James Lewis. Lee's maternal grandmother, Willie Pointer Parish, was the daughter of domestic Charlotte Watts and her Irish employer. Her grandmother married William Parish, who was a 33rd Degree Mason and the first African American mail carrier in El Paso, where Lee's mother was born in 1924. Lee's mother went on to attend Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and served as the president's secretary at the Norfolk Branch of Virginia State College. Lee's father grew up in Nansemond County, Virginia, and met her mother in Norfolk. Her parents divorced after several years of marriage, and her mother then returned to El Paso. There, she met and married Garvin Tutt, who was a lieutenant colonel at the nearby Fort Bliss. Lee was educated through the eighth grade at St. Joseph's School in El Paso, and then moved with her family to California.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Barbara Lee, Section A2013\_249\_001\_002, TRT: 2:29:10 ?

The Honorable Barbara Lee grew up in the Five Points neighborhood of El Paso, Texas, where her family's home had a large garden with a mulberry tree. She was involved in numerous extracurricular activities, including sports, music, dance and gardening. In addition to attending daily mass at St. Joseph's School, she accompanied her maternal grandfather, William Parish, to the Visitors Chapel A.M.E. Church, and joined her mother at the Myrtle Avenue Methodist Church. During this time, the City of El Paso was strictly segregated. When she was thirteen years old, her maternal grandfather decided to move the family to Pacoima, California, a suburb of Los Angeles. There, Lee became the first black cheerleader at San Fernando High School. She also joined the NAACP, where she was influenced by John Mance and Carl McCraven, both of whom served as president of the organization's local branch. At sixteen years old, she became pregnant and married Carl Lee, whom she later divorced.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Barbara Lee, Section A2013\_249\_001\_003, TRT: 3:30:02 ?

The Honorable Barbara Lee graduated from San Fernando Valley High School in 1964. She visited her paternal family in Virginia, and then moved to England with her husband, Carl Lee. After the birth of her first child in 1966, Lee returned to California's San Fernando Valley, where she joined the staff of the Glendale Welfare Council. She had her second child; and, in 1968, moved to the San Francisco Bay Area, where she worked for the State of California as a statistical clerk. Following the assassination of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. that year, Lee joined the Black Panther Party as a community worker. She also matriculated at Mills College in Oakland, California, where she was elected president of the Black Student Union, and raised funds for the college's first study abroad program in Africa. During this time, she served as the fundraising coordinator for Bobby Seale's mayoral campaign in Oakland, and worked on Shirley Chisholm's presidential campaign in 1972.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Barbara Lee, Section A2013\_249\_001\_004, TRT: 4:26:43 ?

The Honorable Barbara Lee graduated in 1973 from Mills College in Oakland, California. While there, she was influenced by black sociologist J. Herman Blake. She continued to be involved in activism, and met influential black political leaders like U.S. Congressman Ronald Dellums and Black Panther Party members Bobby Seale, Elaine Brown and Huey P. Newton. In 1973, Lee enrolled in the social work program at the University of California, Berkeley, where she founded CHANGE, Inc., a mental health center that served the black

community in California's San Francisco Bay Area. In addition to traditional psychotherapists, the center employed psychiatric advocates who assisted clients with access to employment and social services. Lee was influenced by Dr. Price Cobbs and William H. Grier, whose monograph 'Black Rage' was widely read at the time. She also participated in University of California's Cal in the Capital program, through which she served as Congressman Dellums' chief of staff.