

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable LaDoris Cordell

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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>	Cordell, LaDoris H.
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable LaDoris Cordell,
<b>Dates:</b>	November 28, 2017
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2017
<b>Physical Description:</b>	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:37:17).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Judge LaDoris Cordell (1949- ) served on the Municipal Court of Santa Clara County from 1982 until 1988. She was elected to the Superior Court of Santa Clara County in 1988 as the first African American woman to hold a Superior Court judgeship in Northern California, and served on the court until 2001. Cordell was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on November 28, 2017, in Palo Alto, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2017_207
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Judge LaDoris Cordell was born on November 19, 1949 in Ardmore, Pennsylvania to Clara Beatrice Jenkins and Lewis Randall Hazzard. Cordell earned her B.A. degree in drama from Antioch College in 1971, and her J.D. degree from Stanford University in 1974.

Cordell opened the Law Office of LaDoris Hazzard Cordell in East Palo Alto, California. In 1978, she became the assistant dean for student affairs at Stanford University's Law School. Cordell was appointed to the Municipal Court of Santa Clara County by Governor Jerry Brown in 1982. During her time on the Municipal Court, Cordell spent three months as justice pro tem for the State Court of Appeal, Sixth District. In 1988, Cordell won an election to the Superior Court of Santa Clara County, making her the first African American woman to sit on a Superior Court in Northern California. She remained on the court until 2001. Cordell was then hired as vice provost and special counselor to the president for campus relations at Stanford University. In 2003, she was elected to a four-year term on the Palo Alto City Council. Cordell retired from her position at Stanford in 2009 and was appointed as an independent police auditor by the City of San Jose the following year. She remained in that position until 2015. Cordell then served on a Blue Ribbon Panel that reviewed the operations of the San Francisco Police Department. In 2017, she was chosen to be the presiding judge on the television show, "You the Jury."

Cordell received many awards for her community involvement and judicial career. She was the recipient of the Silicon Valley NAACP's William E.B. Dubois Award, the Iola Williams Public Service Award, and the National Council of Negro Women's Public Service Award. Cordell also received the Social Justice Award from the Legal Advocates for Children & Youth and the Rose Bird Memorial Award from the California Women Lawyers.

During her career, Cordell was involved with the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children, United Way of Santa

Clara County, Community Working Group, Inc., Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, the San Francisco Family Violence Project, and the East Palo Alto Art & Music Project, among many others. She also co-founded the African American Composer Initiative in 2014.

Cordell and her partner, Florence Keller, have two daughters, Cheran Denis Cordell and Starr Lynn Cordell.

LaDoris Hazzard Cordell was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on November 28, 2017.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable LaDoris Cordell was conducted by Harriette Cole on November 28, 2017, in Palo Alto, California, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Judge LaDoris Cordell (1949- ) served on the Municipal Court of Santa Clara County from 1982 until 1988. She was elected to the Superior Court of Santa Clara County in 1988 as the first African American woman to hold a Superior Court judgeship in Northern California, and served on the court until 2001.

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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:

Cordell, LaDoris H.

Cole, Harriette (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Cordell, LaDoris H.--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:

Judge

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

LawMakers

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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 LaDoris Cordell, November 28, 2017. 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 LaDoris Cordell, Section A2017\_207\_001\_001, TRT: 1:29:26 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable LaDoris Cordell, Section A2017\_207\_001\_002, TRT: 2:29:58 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable LaDoris Cordell, Section A2017\_207\_001\_003, TRT: 3:29:21 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable LaDoris Cordell, Section A2017\_207\_001\_004, TRT: 4:29:24 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable LaDoris Cordell, Section A2017\_207\_001\_005, TRT: 5:29:08 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable LaDoris Cordell, Section A2017\_207\_001\_006, TRT: 6:29:09 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable LaDoris Cordell, Section A2017\_207\_001\_007, TRT: 7:27:27 ?

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable LaDoris Cordell, Section A2017\_207\_001\_008, TRT: 8:13:24 ?