

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Howard A. Kenner

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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>	Kenner, Howard A., 1957-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Howard A. Kenner,
<b>Dates:</b>	June 9, 2000
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2000
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (1:27:20).
<b>Abstract:</b>	State representative The Honorable Howard A. Kenner (1957 - ) serves on the Committees of Appropriations-General Services, Insurance and Human Services and is the Chairperson of the Illinois State Government Administration and Government Oversight Committee. Kenner was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on June 9, 2000, in Chicago, Illinois. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2000_054
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Howard A. Kenner was born on December 26, 1957 in Chicago, Illinois. He is the oldest of four children of Tyrone and Emma Kenner. When Kenner was eight years old, his parents divorced, and he moved with his mother to Dallas, Texas. However, when his mother died, Kenner returned to Chicago to live with his father, who by this time was an Alderman of Chicago's 3rd Ward. After graduating from Kenwood Academy, Kenner entered the University of Illinois, earning a degree in accounting in 1980. While working as a certified public accountant, Kenner became involved in politics, acting as the campaign treasurer for candidate Wynetta Frazier, who was running for State Representative. He then established the 3rd Ward Young Democratic Organization and became an assistant precinct captain. Kenner moved to Los Angeles, California, and after eight years there returned to Chicago and was approached about running for State Representative on the Harold Washington Party ticket. Losing the election, Kenner decided to run again as a Democrat. This time he was successful.

Kenner serves on the Committees of Appropriations-General Services, Insurance and Human Services and is the Chairperson of the State Government Administration and Government Oversight Committee. In addition to his legislative duties, Kenner continues his accounting career with the firm of Goodall, Kenner & Associates.

Kenner was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on August 9, 2000.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Howard A. Kenner was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on June 9, 2000, in Chicago, Illinois, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. State representative The

Honorable Howard A. Kenner (1957 - ) serves on the Committees of Appropriations-General Services, Insurance and Human Services and is the Chairperson of the Illinois State Government Administration and Government Oversight Committee.

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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:

Kenner, Howard A., 1957-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Haynes, Frank (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Kenner, Howard A., 1957---Interviews

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African American politicians--Illinois--Chicago--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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Illinois

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## Occupations:

State Representative

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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 Howard A. Kenner, June 9, 2000. 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 Howard A. Kenner, Section A2000\_054\_001\_001, TRT: 0:31:05 ?

Howard Kenner was born on December 26, 1957 in Chicago, Illinois, to Emma Kenner, who was born in 1935 in Dallas, Texas, and Tyrone Kenner, who was born in 1928 in Chicago, Illinois. Kenner is the oldest of six children. Until he was five years old, he lived in Hyde Park, Chicago with his family and describes his early childhood memories there. Kenner then moved at age eight to Dallas,

Texas with his mother and siblings when his parents separated. He describes how life in Dallas differed from Chicago, as well as his responsibilities as the oldest child. He also reflects on being raised by a single mother. After the death of his mother in 1975 when he was seventeen years old, Kenner returned to Chicago to live with his father, an alderman in Chicago's Third Ward.

Childhood and youth--Illinois--Chicago.

Childhood and youth--Texas--Dallas.

African American families.

Death.

Children of divorced parents--Relocation

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Howard A. Kenner, Section A2000\_054\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:04 ?

Howard Kenner describes his introduction to the world of Illinois politics when he returned to Chicago at age seventeen to live with his father, Third Ward Alderman Tyrone Kenner, and describes their relationship. Attending the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, and graduating with an accounting degree in 1980, Kenner developed his political interests there but did not receive encouragement from his professors. After graduation, Kenner was hired at the Chicago accounting firm Ernst and Whinney, but spent his free time working on Chicago political campaigns for his father and Representative Wynetta Frazier. Kenner then describes his experiences after his father's bribery conviction in 1983 and how his political career stalled after that.

African American fathers--Mentoring--Illinois--Chicago.

University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign campus)--Accounting.

Ernst & Whinney.

Political corruption--Illinois--Chicago.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Howard A. Kenner, Section A2000\_054\_001\_003, TRT: 0:10:00 ?

Howard Kenner's political career proved difficult after his father's bribery conviction in 1983. He describes the shifting landscape in Illinois, making it difficult for him to pursue his political career. Kenner reflects on how politicians like political opposition leader Edward Vrdolyak made it difficult for him to run for election. Even his friendly relationship with Mayor Harold Washington did not assist him. In 1983, he tried to start his own accounting firm with a colleague, but the negative press about his father's bribery conviction made it impossible. Kenner soon left for Los Angeles, California to work in the entertainment industry.

Vrdolyak, Ed, 1937-

Family histories.

Politics and culture.

Relocation.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Howard A. Kenner, Section A2000\_054\_001\_004, TRT: 0:09:54 ?

Howard Kenner left Los Angeles in 1991 where he worked in the entertainment industry. He returned to Chicago to find the political landscape shifting after district remapping and the formation of the Harold Washington Party which helped to increase the number of African American legislators. Kenner entered politics again with aspirations to be an Illinois State Legislator. He lost his first election, but in 1995, he was elected to the Illinois General Assembly. Kenner

then reflects on the importance of legislature and public service to the African American community.

Employment--California--Los Angeles.

African American legislators--Illinois--Chicago.

African American communities--Laws and legislation.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Howard A. Kenner, Section A2000\_054\_001\_005, TRT: 0:07:17 ?

Howard Kenner talks about influential African American leaders in the Illinois General Assembly, including Senate President Emil Jones, Representative Carol Mosely Braun, and Representative Jesse Madison, and reflects on their contributions. Kenner then talks about his future plans and aspirations, his commitment to public service, and why he thinks young African Americans should be involved in public service.

African American leadership--Illinois--Chicago.

Vocational guidance.

Jones, Emil, 1935-

Braun, Carol Moseley-, 1947