

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable DeLawrence Beard

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Beard, DeLawrence, 1937-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable DeLawrence Beard,
Dates:	April 26, 2003
Bulk Dates:	2003
Physical Description:	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:20:43).
Abstract:	Circuit court judge The Honorable DeLawrence Beard (1937 -) is a chief judge for the Sixth Judicial Circuit Court of Maryland. Beard is also an adjunct professor of law at the University of Maryland and American University. Beard was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 26, 2003, in Rockville, Maryland. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2003_092
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

The Honorable DeLawrence Beard was born in Okolona, Arkansas, on December 26, 1937. Graduating from high school in 1956, Beard joined the Navy, and served until 1959, when he was honorably discharged. He then enrolled in the University of Missouri, where he received a B.A. in political science in 1964. Beard began law school at Missouri in 1964, but withdrew a year later. He would later go on to enter the University of Baltimore School of Law in 1967, earning a J.D. in 1970. In 1977, Beard graduated from the Georgetown University Law Center with an LL.M.

After earning his B.A., Beard joined IBM Corporation in Washington, D.C., where he was a senior marketing representative. Even after earning his law degree, Beard stayed on with IBM, finally going on to practice law in 1974. That year, he began as a prosecutor, first in juvenile court, and the next year, moving to felony cases. By 1978, Beard had moved to the position of senior assistant state's attorney for Montgomery County, Maryland, supervising a team of attorneys and prosecuting serious offenses. Continuing his climb, Beard became a judge in the District Court for Montgomery County in 1982, and in 1984 became an associate judge to the Sixth Judicial Circuit of Maryland, which is also the appellate court. In 1996, Beard advanced to the position of chief judge for the Sixth Judicial Circuit Court, where he remains today.

Beard is also currently an adjunct professor of law at both the University of Maryland and American University in Washington, D.C. He has lectured to incarcerated individuals, giving them advice on life skills. Beard is a member of several Bar Associations and has received a Governor's Citation in 1998 for meritorious service to the state of Maryland.

Beard is married to Lillian, a pediatrician.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable DeLawrence Beard was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 26, 2003, in Rockville, Maryland, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Circuit court judge The Honorable DeLawrence Beard (1937 -) is a chief judge for the Sixth Judicial Circuit Court of Maryland. Beard is also an adjunct professor of law at the University of Maryland and American University.

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:

Beard, DeLawrence, 1937-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Beard, DeLawrence, 1937---Interviews

African American judges--Interviews.

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

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 DeLawrence Beard, April 26, 2003. 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 DeLawrence Beard, Section
A2003_092_001_001, TRT: 0:29:04 ?

DeLawrence Beard was born on December 26, 1937 to Derex Beard, Sr. and Gladys Cook Beard in Okolona, Arkansas. His father was born in 1911 to Lawson Beard and Mary Beard and his mother was born on June 26, 1918 to Willie Mae Cook and Sterling Cook. Both of his parents migrated to Kansas

City, Missouri around 1938 and to St. Louis, Missouri in 1939, where Derex Beard, Sr. worked as a boiler maker and electrician for the Missouri Pacific Railroad. Beard has few memories of his grandparents, or of Okolona, but recalls his childhood in St. Louis, where he regularly attended the Saint Louis Art Museum, the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, the Saint Louis Zoo. He also talks about concerts by Cootie Williams, Count Basie, and Duke Ellington at the Kiel Auditorium. Beard's maternal great-aunt and great-uncle, as well as his maternal aunt and uncle, also moved from Okolona, Arkansas to St. Louis. Beard lived near the Lane Tabernacle C.M.E. Church.

Family--History.

African Americans--Social conditions.

African American families--Missouri--Saint Louis.

African American families--Arkansas--Okolona.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable DeLawrence Beard, Section A2003_092_001_002, TRT: 0:31:00 ?

DeLawrence Beard grew up in segregated central St. Louis and attended Cole Elementary School. When Beard was in sixth grade, his parents moved to the same neighborhood where the Shelley vs. Kraemer Supreme Court case originated, and where he attended Cote Brilliate Elementary school until 1952. Beard later attended Charles H. Sumner High School, one of three black high schools in St. Louis, where he learned about the Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954. He also played basketball, listened to jazz music, worked at Mueller's grocery store, and began to notice the advancement of African Americans in sports and in the press. After graduating in January of 1956, Beard worked as a truck driver for a furrier, as a lathe operator for Remmert-Werner, and as a mechanic for McDonnell Aircraft. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy in August of 1957, and he trained at Naval Station Great Lakes and Naval Station Norfolk before being assigned to the Franklin D. Roosevelt CVA-42 aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean.

African Americans--Social conditions.

African American families--Missouri--Saint Louis.

Franklin D. Roosevelt (Aircraft carrier)

School integration--Missouri--Saint Louis.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable DeLawrence Beard, Section A2003_092_001_003, TRT: 0:30:04 ?

DeLawrence Beard served in the U.S. Navy with the fire control technicians on the Franklin D. Roosevelt aircraft carrier. He left the Navy in August of 1959 and worked at McDonnell Aircraft until January 1960, when he enrolled at the University of Missouri in Columbia. He received his B.A. degree in political science in 1964. Beard worked for the IRS and enrolled at the University of Missouri School of Law for a year before moving to Washington, D.C. in 1965. That year, he was hired by IBM and remained there until 1973. On August 20, 1967, Beard married HistoryMaker Dr. Lillian M. Beard, whom he met through Cary Booker. Beard attended the University of Baltimore School of Law at night and received his J.D. degree in 1970. In 1974, Beard enrolled at the Georgetown University School of Law and was later hired as a prosecutor by the State's Attorney's Office. He received his LL.M. degree from Georgetown in 1977. From 1979, Beard's career climbed as a lawyer and a judge for Maryland district and circuit courts.

Sailors--United States.

Discrimination in employment--United States.

Trail practice--Maryland--Montgomery County.

University of Baltimore--Alumni and alumnae.

Georgetown University--Alumni and alumnae.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable DeLawrence Beard, Section
A2003_092_001_004, TRT: 0:29:50 ?

DeLawrence Beard was appointed as a judge in the District Court for Montgomery County in 1982 and was appointed to the Sixth Judicial Circuit Court of Maryland in 1984 by Governor Harry Hughes. In 1986, Beard was elected by popular vote to a fifteen-year term in the Sixth Judicial Circuit Court, and was re-elected in 2002. Beard describes some of the cases he tried that gained press or had notable legal consequences and reflects on judicial responsibility to the public interest. He also describes the demographics of Montgomery County, Maryland and his experiences presiding over naturalization ceremonies. During his tenure as a lawyer and judge, Beard also taught law courses at George Washington University, Washington College of Law at American University, and the University of Maryland. Beard describes his hope that African Americans will continue their education so that they can stay competitive in the job market and meet the rising bar of challenges they are given. He also reflects upon his legacy.

Trial practice--Anecdotes.

Law--Study and teaching.

American University (Washington, D.C.)--Faculty--Interviews.

University of Massachusetts at Boston--Faculty.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable DeLawrence Beard, Section
A2003_092_001_005, TRT: 0:20:45 ?

DeLawrence Beard reflects upon how he would like to be remembered and narrates his photographs.