

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Anne-Marie Clarke

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## Overview of the Collection

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| <b>Repository:</b>           | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616<br>info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com   |
| <b>Creator:</b>              | Clarke, Anne-Marie, 1949-   |
| <b>Title:</b>                | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Anne-Marie Clarke,   |
| <b>Dates:</b>                | October 19, 2007  |
| <b>Bulk Dates:</b>           | 2007  |
| <b>Physical Description:</b> | 6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:55:40).   |
| <b>Abstract:</b>             | Family court commissioner and hearing officer The Honorable Anne-Marie Clarke (1949 - ) was elected the first African American female president of the City of St. Louis' Board of Police Commissioners. She is also a former president of the Mound City Bar Association. Clarke was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 19, 2007, in St. Louis, Missouri. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| <b>Identification:</b>       | A2007_298   |
| <b>Language:</b>             | The interview and records are in English.   |

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Attorney and St. Louis Family Court Commissioner Anne-Marie Clarke was born in St. Louis, Missouri to Thomas Phillip Clarke, an attorney, and Mary Ann Vincent Clarke, a former hospital nurse supervisor. Clarke graduated from Rosati-Kain High School, an all-female Catholic college preparatory academy.

Clarke attended Northwest Missouri State University, graduating in 1970 with her B.A. degree in political science after only three years of study. Clarke entered Saint Louis University's School of Law and earned her J.D. degree in 1973. In 1979, Clarke married Richard K. Gaines, who would join Clarke in becoming a long standing civic servant in the St. Louis area.

In 1981, Clarke became president of the Mound City Bar Association, a position she remained in for two years. One year after leaving the presidency, Clarke wrote a significant piece for the St. Louis Bar Journal entitled "The History of the Black Bar," which has been cited in a number of prominent publications, including J. Clay Smith's 1999 book *Emancipation: The Making of the Black Lawyer 1844-1944*.

Clarke became Juvenile Division Hearing Officer for the 22nd Judicial Circuit Court of Missouri (City of St. Louis) in 1986, where she would remain for twelve years. During her time in this position, Clarke was known for developing innovative sentences for juveniles who had committed crimes. The same year that Clarke became the Juvenile Division Hearing Officer, she joined the Board of Governors for The Missouri Bar, becoming the first black member of the organization.

In 1993, Missouri governor, Mel Carnahan, appointed Clarke as a member of the City of St. Louis' Board of Police Commissioners, making her the first African American woman to serve on the Board. She was also elected treasurer by the Board's members. The following year, Clarke became the first female president of the Board after

a unanimous election. After four years as president, Clarke resigned from the Board and became the Family Court Commissioner for the 22nd Judicial Court (City of St. Louis). She has been a member of the National Bar Association Judicial Council for many years. In 2004, Clarke was elected a member of the Judicial Council's Executive Board, and in June 2005, Clarke was assigned to the Domestic Relations Division.

Clarke was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on October 19, 2007.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Anne-Marie Clarke was conducted by Larry Crowe on October 19, 2007, in St. Louis, Missouri, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Family court commissioner and hearing officer The Honorable Anne-Marie Clarke (1949 - ) was elected the first African American female president of the City of St. Louis' Board of Police Commissioners. She is also a former president of the Mound City Bar Association.

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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:

Clarke, Anne-Marie, 1949-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Clarke, Anne-Marie, 1949- --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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St. Louis (Mo.)

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## Occupations:

Family Court Commissioner

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Hearing Officer

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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 Anne-Marie Clarke, October 19, 2007. 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 Anne-Marie Clarke, Section A2007\_298\_001\_001, TRT: 0:31:40 ?

The Honorable Anne-Marie Clarke describes her family background. Her mother, Mary Ann Vincent Clarke, was born in Lawrenceville, Virginia in 1913 to tobacco farmers Wiley and Lavinia Vincent. She attended high school at Saint Paul's College in Lawrenceville and worked as a domestic. Clarke's mother studied nursing in Freedmen's Hospital at Howard University in Washington, D.C., and worked as a nurse while studying at West Virginia State University in Institute. She was a member of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. In 1941, Clarke's mother moved to St. Louis, Missouri to work at Homer Phillips Hospital, and met Clarke's father, Thomas Phillip Clarke. Born in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi in 1913 to farmers Jefferson and Adele Beard Clarke, a benefactor paid for him to attend Xavier University in New Orleans, Louisiana where he joined the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. He went on to Lincoln University School of Law in St. Louis. Clarke talks about Lloyd L. Gaines' 1936 lawsuit that led to the creation of the law school.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Anne-Marie Clarke, Section A2007\_298\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:10 ?

The Honorable Anne-Marie Clarke's father avoided the World War II draft and received his J.D. degree from Lincoln University School of Law in St. Louis, Missouri in 1946. Not permitted to join the American Bar Association, he was admitted to The Missouri Bar (Integrated) and was also a member of the black National Bar Association. Clarke talks about her father's mentor, David M. Grant, how her parents met and her childhood home. As a young girl, Clarke wanted to become a lawyer like her father. Her mother's friendships with HistoryMakers Margaret Bush Wilson and Frankie Freeman exposed her to black women lawyers. Clarke recalls the sights, sounds, and smells of growing up in The Ville community of St. Louis. She attended Visitation Academy, an all-black Catholic school, where she had several memorable teachers. In 1963, Clarke enrolled in Rosati-Kain High School, a predominantly white Catholic girls' school, where she excelled academically and played the bassoon. She recalls her exposure to music as a youth.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Anne-Marie Clarke, Section A2007\_298\_001\_003, TRT: 0:28:20 ?

The Honorable Anne-Marie Clarke shares her childhood memories of the Civil Rights Movement, including the 1957 integration of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas and the 1964 murder of three civil rights workers in Mississippi. Clarke also describes road trips to Bay St. Louis, Mississippi as a child. Her parents always loaded the car with food and only stopped in Mound Bayou, Mississippi, a black community. She recalls segregation in Bay St. Louis and the city's decline after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. She also recounts one of her father's earliest court cases as a lawyer. Clarke was an excellent student at Rosati-Kain High School in St. Louis, Missouri, and after graduating in 1967, she enrolled in Northwest Missouri State University in Maryville. She talks about one of her professors there and her father's advice about hard work. In 1970, she received her B.A. degree in political science and enrolled at St. Louis University School of Law, where she was one of the first African American women.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Anne-Marie Clarke, Section  
A2007\_298\_001\_004, TRT: 0:28:40 ?

The Honorable Anne-Marie Clarke graduated with a J.D. degree from St. Louis University School of Law in Missouri in 1973. She then briefly worked for HistoryMaker Judge Wayman Smith to learn about the legal profession before joining Arthur D. Little, a consulting firm in Boston, Massachusetts. Clarke remembers studying for the Missouri bar exam and finding out she passed after returning from a summer trip with her family to Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. Clarke later left Boston to work as a corporate lawyer in Hartford, Connecticut while living in nearby Middletown. In 1977, she returned to St. Louis to become staff counsel for the Bi-State Development Agency, which managed the public transit system for the metro area. Clarke describes some of her mentors including HistoryMakers Wayman Smith, Margaret Bush Wilson, and Frankie Freeman. In 1985, Clarke lost her bid to become referee of Missouri's Juvenile Court Division. She recounts her contentious 1993 appointment to the St. Louis Board of Police Commissioners.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Anne-Marie Clarke, Section  
A2007\_298\_001\_005, TRT: 0:28:30 ?

Anne-Marie Clarke describes her service on the St. Louis, Missouri Board of Police Commissioners. In 1993, Missouri Governor Mel Carnahan appointed her on the recommendation of her godmother's husband, State Senator J.B. "Jet" Banks. The appointment attracted controversy due to her relationship with Banks, but she was unanimously confirmed by the Senate. That same year, Carnahan and Banks asked Clarke to vote for former St. Louis mayor Jim Conway as the board's president, rather than the African American Charles Micheaux, which she did despite objections from members of the black community. Although the board had a black majority for the first time in history, including incumbent mayor HistoryMaker Freeman Bosley, Jr., as well as Police Chief Clarence Harmon, internal conflicts damaged the board's effectiveness that year. When Carnahan did not reappoint Conway in 1994, Clarke decided to run for board president and won. She was the second black president and the first woman president of the board.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Anne-Marie Clarke, Section  
A2007\_298\_001\_006, TRT: 0:29:20 ?

The Honorable Anne-Marie Clarke reflects upon her life and career. While serving as president of the St. Louis Board of Police Commissioners in Missouri, she was sued by white officer Thomas Moran for wrongful dismissal after he was fired for the beating of a mentally disabled man. When Judge Charles Shaw dismissed the case, Moran appealed on the grounds that Shaw should have recused himself due to his collegial relationship with Clarke. Clarke also talks about the research for her 1984 St. Louis Bar Journal article 'The History of the Black Bar,' and she recounts the history of the Mound City Bar Association, of which she was president at the time. She lists pioneering black attorneys in St. Louis, including HistoryMaker Margaret Bush Wilson, and describes her classmate Judge Evelyn Baker. Clarke describes her judicial philosophy, her truancy court program, and her hopes and concerns for the African American community. She reflects upon her life and legacy, and describes how she would like to be remembered.