

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Yvette McGee Brown

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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>	Brown, Yvette, 1960-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Yvette McGee Brown,
<b>Dates:</b>	April 6, 2012
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2012
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:31:04).
<b>Abstract:</b>	State supreme court judge The Honorable Yvette McGee Brown (1960 - ) was the first African American woman to serve on the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas and the Supreme Court of Ohio. She also founded the Center for Child and Family Advocacy at Columbus Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio. McGee Brown was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 6, 2012, in Columbus, Ohio. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2012_087
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Ohio State Justice Yvette McGee Brown was born in Columbus Ohio to Sylvia Kendrick on July 1, 1960. After graduating from Columbus, Ohio's Mifflin High School, McGee Brown attended Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. She graduated with her B.S. degree in journalism from Ohio University in 1982. Three years later, McGee Brown graduated from Ohio State University's Moritz College of Law with her J.D. degree in law. In 1992, McGee Brown was elected to the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas, Domestic Relations and Juvenile division. As lead Juvenile Court Judge, she led the creation of the Family Drug Court and the SMART Program, a truancy and educational neglect intervention program. After nine years on the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas, she retired from the bench to create the Center for Child and Family Advocacy at Nationwide Children's Hospital, a multi-disciplinary child abuse and family violence program. In 2008, McGee Brown was also elected to the Ohio Elections Commission. After serving as founding president for the Center for Child and Family Advocacy, McGee Brown became a candidate for lieutenant governor of Ohio, tabbed by then Governor Ted Strickland in 2010. Strickland appointed her to the Ohio Supreme Court after losing his gubernatorial bid. McGee Brown became the first African American woman to be appointed to the Supreme Court of Ohio.

An active community and corporate leader, Justice McGee Brown has served on the boards of Ohio University, The Ohio State University Medical Center, the National Council of the OSU Moritz College of Law, M/I Homes Inc. and Fifth Third Bank of Central Ohio. She is the former chair of the United Way of Central Ohio, The Ohio State University Alumni Association and the YWCA Columbus Board of Directors. In 2008, Justice McGee Brown was inducted into the Ohio Women's Hall of Fame. Among her many honors, she has received the Champion of Children Award, YWCA Woman of Achievement Award and several honors from Ohio University and The Ohio State University.

Justice McGee Brown is married to Tony Brown. They have three children and one grandson.

Justice Yvette McGee Brown was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on April 6, 2012.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with The Honorable Yvette McGee Brown was conducted by Larry Crowe on April 6, 2012, in Columbus, Ohio, and was recorded on 5 uncompressed MOV digital video files. State supreme court judge The Honorable Yvette McGee Brown (1960 - ) was the first African American woman to serve on the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas and the Supreme Court of Ohio. She also founded the Center for Child and Family Advocacy at Columbus Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio.

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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:

Brown, Yvette, 1960-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Brown, Yvette, 1960- --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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Ohio Supreme Court

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## Occupations:

State Supreme Court 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 Yvette McGee Brown, April 6, 2012. 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 Yvette McGee Brown, Section  
A2012\_087\_001\_001, TRT: 1:29:54 ?

The Honorable Yvette McGee Brown was born on July 1, 1960 in Columbus, Ohio to Sylvia Banks Kendrick. Her maternal great-grandfather, Alexander Bailey, worked as a sharecropper in Macon, Georgia. Her maternal grandmother, Eunice Bailey Banks, was born in Macon, and later joined her older sister in Columbus, where Brown's mother was born in 1941. Upon graduating from Central High School, Brown's mother secured part time work at Swan Cleaners, and met Brown's father, who was six years her senior. She became pregnant, and went on to raise Brown and her two half-brothers by herself. When Brown was twelve years old, her mother was diagnosed with Guillain-Barré syndrome. For the next two years, she was raised by her maternal grandmother while her mother recovered. Brown also remembers meeting her half-sister, and shares what she knows about her father, who was from West Virginia and taught high school in Cleveland, Ohio.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Yvette McGee Brown, Section  
A2012\_087\_001\_002, TRT: 2:28:33 ?

The Honorable Yvette McGee Brown was raised by her mother and maternal grandmother, Sylvia Banks Kendrick and Eunice Bailey Banks, in Columbus, Ohio. There, Brown began her education at Fairwood Elementary School, and then transferred to South Mifflin Elementary School. After attending Mifflin Middle School, she enrolled at the predominantly black Mifflin High School in Columbus, where she joined the student council and was mentored by her guidance counselor, Joan Pringle. During this time, Brown interviewed Judge Robert Morton Duncan, who decided the desegregation case of Penick v. Columbus Board of Education in 1977. Aspiring to a career in journalism, she matriculated in 1978 at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. There, she studied under political science professor Frank Henderson and journalism professor Sandra Haggerty, who advised her to pursue a law degree. Upon graduating, Brown returned to Columbus, where she enrolled at The Ohio State University College of Law.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Yvette McGee Brown, Section  
A2012\_087\_001\_003, TRT: 3:28:20 ?

The Honorable Yvette McGee Brown attended The Ohio State University College of Law in Columbus, Ohio, where she was mentored by Dean James Meeks, Associate Dean John P. Henderson and student affairs administrator Barbara Rich. Upon graduating in 1985, Brown joined the office of Ohio Attorney General Anthony J. Celebrezze, Jr., where she represented the State Medical Board of Ohio. She went on to serve as chief counsel to the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, where she implemented several consent decrees regarding racial and gender discrimination. She later worked for the Ohio Department of Youth Services. In 1992, Brown successfully campaigned for a judgeship in the Domestic Division and Juvenile Branch of the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas, where she was responsible for a variety of cases, including child abuse and custody disputes. Brown also talks about Judge Lillian W. Burke, who was the first African American female judge in the State of Ohio.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Yvette McGee Brown, Section  
A2012\_087\_001\_004, TRT: 4:29:29 ?

The Honorable Yvette McGee Brown served on the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas from 1993 to 2002. During this time, she created the Student Mediation and Assistance to Reduce Truancy program and established a Family

Drug Court, which aimed to reduce dependence on the foster care system for children of addicted parents. After stepping down from her position on the court, Brown founded the Center for Child and Family Advocacy at the Columbus Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, where she consolidated the reporting and support processes for child abuse victims. In 2008, she served on the Ohio Elections Commission, which handled election complaint hearings. She was also inducted into the Ohio Women's Hall of Fame. Two years later, Brown agreed to become Ohio Governor Ted Strickland's running mate in his campaign for reelection. She reflects upon her early judicial career and her marriage to Anthony Brown.

Video Oral History Interview with The Honorable Yvette McGee Brown, Section A2012\_087\_001\_005, TRT: 5:34:48 ?

The Honorable Yvette McGee Brown was the running mate of Ohio Governor Ted Strickland during his reelection campaign in 2010. After they were defeated by the Republican Party candidate, John Kasich, Strickland appointed Brown to the Supreme Court of Ohio. As a result, Brown became the first African American female justice on the court. She served alongside three men and three women, including Evelyn Lundberg Stratton and Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor. During her tenure, Brown presided over cases regarding issues like eminent domain and the death penalty. At the time of the interview in 2012, Brown was seeking reelection. With her husband, Anthony Brown, she had two stepdaughters, Belinda Waters Brown and Laura Brown, and a son, David Brown. Brown reflects upon her life, legacy and hopes and concerns for the African American community. She concludes the interview by describing how she would like to be remembered.