

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Freddie Pitcher

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IDENTIFICATION: McKinley High School graduate class of 1962; Baton Rouge's first African American city court judge, adjunct professor of law at Southern University and Louisiana State University, full professor and chancellor of Southern University Law Center.

INTERVIEWER: Roderick Jones

SERIES: McKinley High School Oral History Project – History of McKinley High

INTERVIEW DATES: June 12, 1995

FOCUS DATES: late 1950s- early 1960s

ABSTRACT:

Tape 906, Side A

Born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, April 28, 1945; father worked at Exxon forty-three years; mother was a beautician, then housewife; graduated McKinley High in 1962; siblings also attended McKinley; a typical day at McKinley; enjoyed singing with his friends; strong academics at McKinley; better prepared for college than his classmates at Southern; especially strong math program at McKinley; sports played prominent role at McKinley; Pitcher played football and tennis; rivalry with Capitol and Scotlandville high schools; burning effigies at pep rallies; member of drama club; drama club won state title at Grambling; had one line in winning play; started as a "C" student as freshmen; took IQ test, moved into more academically advanced classes, got on honor roll for duration of high school; inspired by his lawyer cousin; first prom was most memorable experience; favorite teachers; Mrs. Anderson, English teacher who helped him conquer stuttering; football coaches George Mencer and Carl Ford; performed well academically at Southern after graduating from McKinley; McKinley graduates perform strongly after schooling; political figures who graduated from McKinley, including Joe Delpit, Freddie Pitcher, Cleo Fields; Pitcher was first black to be elected to a judgeship in Baton Rouge; first black to be elected to a district court seat; first black to sit on the Louisiana First Circuit Court of Appeal; kinship between McKinley graduates; contrasting present day McKinley with 1960s McKinley; advises young people to take full advantage of academic opportunities; "reading was the key to my success"; summer program at Yale before senior year in college was Pitcher's first integrated schooling; refers other possible interviewees.

TAPES: 1 (T906)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 35 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 13 pages

RESTRICTIONS: None