

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: John Michael Guidry

COLLECTION: 4700.0625

IDENTIFICATION: McKinley High School graduate, class of 1980; Louisiana politician;
Judge of the First Circuit Court of Appeal

INTERVIEWER: Dana Sims

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

INTERVIEW DATE: June 6, 1995

FOCUS DATES: 1976-1995

ABSTRACT:

Tape 909, Side A

Guidry born in Baton Rouge on January 19, 1962; mother attended McKinley; both parents attended Southern University; mother was a nurse's aide, father worked for California state government; Guidry attended McKinley from 1976 to 1980; describes typical day at McKinley; academics first and foremost; Panther pride and popularity of sports; rivalry with Capitol High School; most students were from the neighborhood; the school had a strong sense of community; mentions his many extracurricular activities; was an honor student; role models included mother, Representative Joseph Delpit, Martin Luther King Jr., and some of the older students; influence of Coach Albert Turner; inspired by Representative Delpit from time that Delpit spoke at Guidry's middle school; at Delpit's behest, Guidry and classmate Cleo Fields started youth arm of South Baton Rouge Advisory Council; evolution of McKinley Junior High School to McKinley Middle School; influence of McKinley on political life of African Americans in Louisiana; Guidry is now in Louisiana State Senate and Cleo Fields is in U.S. Congress; memorable moments in his high school academic and extracurricular career; describes activities of South Baton Rouge Youth Council; Guidry and Fields both served on student governments of their colleges; McKinley shaped people who went into all fields of employment; Guidry's career trajectory in politics since graduating from LSU; went to law school at Southern University; served as assistant parish attorney from 1988 to 1991; served in Louisiana House of Representatives for a year before being elected to Louisiana State Senate; also practices law and teaches law at Southern University; McKinley taught them to be multi-faceted as students, which helped them later in life; many student leaders at McKinley became leaders in civil rights movement; didn't like math as much as other courses; McKinley football stadium now has lights and press box; gifted and talented program added since Guidry's time at McKinley; McKinley was still mostly black when Guidry attended; true integration started in 1981; changes in principals; encourages students to do their best and have a sense of pride in McKinley; hanging

out with his friends; stayed busy with athletics, yearbook staff, part time jobs and homework; alma mater is etched in his mind and heart; now that he's an adult, he often misses his days as a McKinley student; has no regrets; summarizes meaning of McKinley; recommends other people to interview; mother emphasized importance of education and sacrificed for his; coaches were disciplinarians; emotions behind rivalry with Capitol High; character and honest; all McKinley graduates important, not just the famous ones.

TAPE: 1 (T909)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 39 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 19 pages

OTHER MATERIALS: None

RESTRICTIONS: None