

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Marvin Merriweather

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Tumultuous 2020* Oral History project

Interview # T20-A-L-2022-45

Marvin Merriweather, a licensed clinical social worker and therapist, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Tumultuous 2020* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: June 18, 2022

Location: Merriweather's house in Springfield, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Amanda Riggenbach, *Tumultuous 2020* project manager

Transcription by: \_\_\_\_\_

Edited by: \_\_\_\_\_

Transcript being  
processed.

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Time: 2:17 / 2.28 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on August 14, 2022.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

© 2022 Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum

## Abstract

### Marvin Merriweather, *Tumultuous 2020*, T20-A-L-2022-45

**Biographical Information/Overview of Interview:** Marvin Merriweather was born in Gary, Indiana, in 1987. He attended Roosevelt High School in Gary and was actively involved with the swim team, baseball, and more. His senior year he joined the cheer team with several of his friends, proving to be some of the first boys to do so. He graduated in 2005 and began pursuing a nursing degree from Tuskegee University in Alabama. Merriweather describes the difficulty he had finding his academic footing before he switched his major to social work. Tuskegee boasts one of the most difficult social work programs in the state of Alabama and Merriweather began to thrive in this new program. His mentor found one of his papers to be so impressive, she submitted it to the Alabama Mississippi Social Work Conference. Merriweather was later accepted to present his paper. He graduated in 2012 and then began attending the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana for his Master of Social Work. After earning his master's in 2014, he began working for various agencies in Champaign. In 2018 he moved to Springfield, Illinois, to provide chairside counseling to patients getting dialysis at DaVita Inc., which provides kidney dialysis services.

In December 2019, Merriweather began to prepare for the opening of his private practice. After years of saving, he was looking for office space and purchasing furniture. He planned to open in the spring of 2020. When the COVID-19 pandemic became prevalent in the spring of 2020, Merriweather's plans were halted. His work with DeVita was considered essential and so he was able to continue to work. He describes the impact of seeing patients deteriorate in their mental health, as they were at a high risk for COVID. In the interview, Merriweather shares a particularly difficult experience with a patient he had grown close to. Once legislation passed making telehealth therapy more accessible to therapists, Merriweather was able to build his practice in this capacity. Merriweather details the way the pandemic impacted his personal life, concluding with reflections over his experiences.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** Tumultuous 2020; Tumultuous 2020 oral history; COVID-19 pandemic; COVID-19; pandemic; pandemic's impact on mental health; Marvin Merriweather; counselor; mental health; therapist; therapy; Be Strong Mental Health and Therapeutic Services; Be Strong MH; Springfield, Illinois

**Notes to the Reader:** Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

### **COPYRIGHT**

**The following material can be used for educational and other non-commercial purposes without the written permission of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. "Fair use" criteria of Section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976 must be followed. These materials are not to be deposited in other repositories, nor used for resale or commercial purposes without authorization from the ALPLM.**