

# Kathryn Harris

An Interview with Kathryn Harris,  
Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Family Memories* Oral History project  
Interviews on Oct 19, Nov 8 & Dec 6, 2006  
Interview # FM-V-L-2006-001

Kathryn Harris, the Director of Library Services at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, was interviewed on the above listed dates as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Family Memories* Oral History series. The interviews were conducted at the following locations:

October 19, 2006: The ALPL Foundation Conference Room, ALPL

November 8, 2006: Kathryn Harris' private residence

December 6, 2006: ALPL Photographic lab

Interviews were conducted by Mark R. DePue, the Director of Oral History for ALPL, completing both audio interviews as well as video taping, with Sam Cooper of ALPLM serving as cameraman. The interview was the first conducted for the Library's new Oral History program.

Transcript and editing by Mark R. DePue, Mary White & Carolyn Berning

Indexed by Carolyn Berning

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The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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# Abstract

## Kathryn Harris, Family Memories, FM-A-L-2006-001

**Background Information/Interview Synopsis:** Kathryn Harris serves as the Director of Library Services at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois. She was born in Carbondale, Illinois on December 5, 1947 to William and Eurma Hayes. This interview covers Kathryn's experiences growing up in Carbondale, Illinois, her college years at Southern Illinois University and graduate school at the University of Illinois's Library Sciences program. It also covers her early employment, her life with husband Al Harris and daughter Kori, and concludes with the opening of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in 2005. Of particular interest are Kathryn's memories of her childhood on the east side of Carbondale, Illinois, part of a vibrant African American community in the midst of a predominantly white community. Kathryn also shares many memories of her parents and siblings, and of the values and character they imparted to her.

This interview constitutes the first one conducted by Mark DePue upon assuming the position as Director of Oral History for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Mark used this interview, and the processing of the same, as a practical example while developing the policies and procedures for the ALPL Oral History Program. Kathryn, to her credit, was an ideal subject for this purpose – thoughtful, engaging, and a superb story-teller in her own right, as well as being very cooperative and fully engaged throughout the processing of the interview.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** Growing up in Black in Carbondale, Illinois; Southern Illinois University; University of Illinois Library Science program; Illinois State Historical Library; creation of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library; Harriet Tubman;

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