

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Marvin Hightower

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

Interview # T20-A-L-2022-011

Marvin Hightower, chapter president of the Peoria NAACP and reverend at Liberty Church of Peoria, 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: February 25, 2022      Location: Session 1, Liberty Church of Peoria, Illinois

Date: February 28, 2022      Location: Session 2, Telephone interview with  
Hightower in his Peoria home.

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Amanda Riggenbach, *Tumultuous 2020* project manager

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

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

Transcript being  
processed.

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_      Total Time: 55:42 / 0.93 + 1:03:00 / 1.05 = 2:00 / 2.00

Session 1: Childhood in Peoria, Illinois, journey to becoming pastor, NAACP presidency, start of COVID-19 pandemic in Illinois and in Peoria

Session 2: Continued discussion about COVID-19 pandemic, racial disparities, and racism in Peoria and the United States

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on May 31, 2022.

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

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## Abstract

Marvin Hightower, *Tumultuous 2020*, T20-A-L-2022-011

**Biographical Information/Overview of Interview:** Marvin Hightower was born and raised in Peoria, Illinois. He grew up on the Southside of Peoria, which at the time was a robust community of homeowners. His father was the pastor at Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church, which (at the time of the interview) was still located on Hightower Street, named for the family. Hightower attended Richwoods High School, which was on the far north side of Peoria. During this period, Peoria Public Schools bused students across town after integration. He married his wife, Loreece, in 1994. He described feeling the call to ministry since he was a child, but it wasn't until he was thirty years old that he accepted it. He and his family moved to Columbus, Ohio and he began attending World Harvest Bible College. They remained in Columbus for ten years before he became pastor at Liberty Church of Peoria. Once they returned to Peoria, Hightower became involved in the community once again. This involvement included being a member of the local NAACP branch and then, in 2016, being elected branch President. At the time of the interview, he was still serving as President.

Throughout the course of the interview, Hightower discusses the way the COVID-19 pandemic impacted his church's congregation. He also outlines the work the Peoria branch of the NAACP completed from the start of the pandemic in March 2020 to the time of the interview, February 2022. Hightower also details the way the Peoria NAACP responded to the summer of protests for racial justice in 2020. Hightower relays his experiences over the past two years as well as his impressions of the changing political and social frameworks throughout the pandemic.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** COVID-19, COVID-19 pandemic; *Tumultuous 2020*; *Tumultuous 2020* oral history; Peoria, Illinois; Liberty Church of Peoria; Hightower; Columbus, Ohio; World Harvest Bible College; NAACP; NAACP Peoria Branch;

**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 is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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