

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with john powell

PERSON

**Powell, John A. (John Anthony)**

**Alternative Names:** john powell; john a. powell

**Life Dates:** May 27, 1947-

**Place of Birth:** Detroit, Michigan, USA

**Residence:** Berkeley, CA

**Work:** Berkeley, CA

**Occupations:** Academic Administrator; Nonprofit Legal Director; Law Professor

## Biographical Note

Professor john a. powell, who does not capitalize his name, was born on May 27, 1947 in Detroit, Michigan. He is recognized as an expert in the areas of civil rights, civil liberties and issues relating to race, poverty and the law and has written extensively on the effects of race and poverty on U.S. society.

Professor powell earned a B.A. in psychology from Stanford University in 1969 and a J.D. from the University of California at Berkeley in 1973, after which he became an attorney with the Seattle Public Defender's Office. In 1977, powell received an International Human Rights Fellowship from the University of Minnesota to work in Africa, where he served as a consultant to the government of Mozambique. Between 1987 and 1993, he worked as a national legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Professor powell taught at Columbia University School of Law, Harvard Law School, University of Miami School of Law, American University, The University of San Francisco School of Law, The Minnesota Law School before becoming the director of the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University. He also holds the Gregory H. Williams Chair in Civil Rights & Civil Liberties at the Moritz College of Law. He was the founder and Executive Director of the Institute on Race and Poverty (IRP), located at the University of Minnesota Law School and was appointed the Earl R. Larson Chair of Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Law at Minnesota.

Professor powell is also a member of the National Legal Aid and Defender, the

National Housing Law Center Association, the National Bar Association and the American Bar Association's Commission on Homelessness and Poverty. He serves on the Board of Directors of the Poverty and Race Research Action Council (PRRAC) and the Minnesota Supreme Court's Implementation Committee on Multicultural Diversity and Racial Fairness.

## Related Entries

**Southwestern High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Stanford University** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**B.A.**

**University of California, Berkeley** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**J.D.**

**Harvard Law School** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1994 to 1996]

**Wasserstein Public Interest Fellow**

**University of Miami School of Law** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Instructor**

**American University Washington College of Law** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Instructor**

**University of Minnesota Law School** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Earl R. Larson Chair in Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Law**

**Moritz College of Law** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Gregory H. Williams Chair in Civil Rights and Civil Liberties**

**Seattle Public Defender's Office** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1973 to ?]

**Attorney**

**Government of Mozambique** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1977 to ?]

**Consultant**

**Evergreen Legal Services** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1979 to 1981]

**Lawyer**

**Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc.** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 1981 to 1983]

**Lawyer**

**University of San Francisco School of Law** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 1983 to ?]

**Law Professor**

**American Civil Liberties Union** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 1987 to 1993]

**National Legal Director**

**Columbia Law School** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 1993 to ?]

**Law Professor**

**University of Minnesota Law School** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 1993 to 2002]

**The Ohio State University** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 2002 to 2012]

**Director**

**University of California, Berkeley Law School** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 2012 to ?]

**Director**

**University of California, Berkeley Law School** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 2012 to ?]

**Law Professor**