

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Deval L. Patrick

PERSON

Patrick, Deval

Alternative Names: The Honorable Deval L. Patrick;

Life Dates: July 31, 1956-

Place of Birth: Chicago, Illinois, USA

Residence: Richmond, Massachusetts

Work: Cambridge, Massachusetts

Occupations: Governor

Biographical Note

The Honorable Deval L. Patrick was born in Chicago, Illinois on July 31, 1956. His father, Laurdine “Pat” Patrick, a musician, left the family while Patrick was young. Patrick was raised by his mother, Emily Wintersmith Patrick, near the Robert Taylor Homes on Chicago's South Side. In the eighth grade, Patrick was given a scholarship by A Better Chance to attend Milton Academy outside of Boston. Patrick then was accepted to Harvard University, where he earned his A.B. degree in English and American literature in 1978.

After graduating from Harvard, Patrick was awarded a Rockefeller Fellowship, where he worked for the United Nations, traveling and living in the Sudan. He returned to the United States in 1979 and enrolled in Harvard Law School, where he earned his J.D. degree in 1982. After working as a clerk in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in Los Angeles for one year, Patrick moved to New York City and joined the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund. There, filed a lawsuit in a voting rights case against then-Governor Bill Clinton. Patrick remained with the NAACP until 1986, when he joined the Boston law firm Hill & Barlow, where he became partner. He continued his civil rights work, and in 1994, President Clinton appointed Patrick to the position of Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice. In this role, Patrick worked to ensure that federal laws banning discrimination were enforced. He also oversaw an investigation into a series of church burnings throughout the South. In 1997, after three years with the Clinton Administration, Patrick returned to private practice with the Boston law firm Day, Berry & Howard where he focused his efforts on major commercial litigation and civil rights compliance issues. Patrick then joined Texaco in 1999 as vice president and

general counsel and in 2001 he became executive vice president and general counsel for the Coca-Cola Company. Patrick left Coca-Cola in 2005.

Patrick was elected the governor of Massachusetts in 2006, serving until 2015. He was the first African American governor of Massachusetts and the second African American governor in the country since Reconstruction. As governor, Patrick oversaw health care reform, increased funding for education and life sciences, overhauled state transportation, increased the state sales tax, raised the state's minimum wage, and planned the introduction of casinos. After his governorship, Patrick joined Bain Capital, ran for U.S. president in 2020, and became a professor and co-director of the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard Kennedy School.

Patrick has served on the boards of Our Generation Speaks, Reebok International, Coca-Cola, A Better Chance, the Ford Foundation, Harvard University, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Patrick is also the recipient of numerous awards and seven honorary degrees.

Patrick and his wife, Diane Bemus Patrick, live in Boston. They have two children, Sarah Patrick and Katherine Patrick.

The Honorable Deval L. Patrick was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on October 14, 2004 and October 17, 2022.

Related Entries

Du Sable Leadership Academy [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Martha M. Ruggles Elementary School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Mary Church Terrell Elementary School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Milton Academy [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

Harvard University [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

A.B.

Harvard Law School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

J.D.

United States Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1982 to 1983]

Clerk

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Legal Defense Fund [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1983 to 1986]

Attorney

Hill & Barlow, P.C. [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1986 to 1994]

Attorney/Partner

United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1994 to 1997]

Assistant Attorney General

Day, Berry & Howard [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1997 to 1999]

Attorney

Texaco [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 1999 to 2001]

Vice President and General Counsel

Coca-Cola Company [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 2001 to 2005]

Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary

State of Massachusetts [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 2007 to 2015]

Governor

Bain Capital [EMPLOYEEOf]

[from 2015 to ?]

Managing Director for Social Impact

Milton Academy [MEMBEROf]

[from ? to ?]

Board Member

Massachusetts Judicial Nominating Council [MEMBEROf]

[from ? to ?]

Vice Chair

Federal Election Reform Commission [MEMBEROf]

[from ? to ?]

Board Member

American Bar Association [MEMBEROf]

[from ? to ?]

Member

Ford Foundation [MEMBEROf]

[from ? to ?]

Chairman, Audit Committee

A Better Chance, Inc. [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Board Member

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Board Member

Reebok, International [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Chairman, Committee

Our Generation Speaks [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Chair