

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Robert Jackson

PERSON

Jackson, Robert, 1950-

Alternative Names: Robert Jackson;

Life Dates: December 18, 1950-

Place of Birth: New York, New York, USA

Residence: New York, NY

Work: New York, NY

Occupations: City Council Member

Biographical Note

City council member Robert Jackson was born on December 18, 1950 in New York City to Zelma Jackson Chu. Jackson attended Walter J. Damrosch School and J.H.S. 120 Paul Lawrence Dunbar. In 1975, he received his B.A. degree in sociology from the State University of New York at New Paltz. That same year, Jackson moved to the Manhattan community of Washington Heights.

Jackson's political career began in 1986, when he won a seat on New York City's Community School Board 6. As president of the board, Jackson co-founded in 1993 the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, Inc. with Attorney Michael Rebell. Under the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, Jackson sued the State of New York, arguing that the state did not provide adequate funds to serve the needs of New York City's school children. In 1995, the New York Court of Appeals decided Campaign for Fiscal Equity v. State of New York in Jackson's favor. Jackson accepted a position in 1993 as director of field services with the Public Employees Federation. In 2001, Jackson ran for a seat on the New York City Council and won, where he represented the constituents of the Washington Heights community and parts of Harlem. When Governor George Pataki brought Campaign for Fiscal Equity v. State of New York before the New York Court of Appeals in 2003, Jackson staged a march from New York City to the state capital of Albany. The Court of Appeals upheld the New York Supreme Court's original decision, and the New York State legislature enacted the Education Budget and Reform Act in 2007. In 2011, Jackson staged another protest walk from New York City to Albany, New York to contest Governor Andrew Cuomo's proposed \$1.5 billion cut to the New York State's education budget. Jackson won re-election to the New York City Council twice, serving until 2013.

During his tenure as councilman, Jackson served as the only Muslim member of the council as well as the chair of the education committee in addition to serving on the finance, housing & buildings, land use, sanitation & solid waste management, and zoning & franchises committees.

A long time resident of New York City, Jackson's wife, Faika Rifai Jackson, have two daughters.

Robert Jackson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on December 1, 2016.

Related Entries

State University of New York at New Paltz [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

P.S. 186 Harlem [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

J.H.S. 120 Paul Lawrence Dunbar [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

Manhattan Center for Science and Mathematics [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

P.S. 146, Edward J. Collins School [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

State University of New York at New Paltz [STUDENTOf]
[from ? to ?]

[EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1990 to 1994]

[EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1969 to 1984]

[EMPLOYEEOf]
[from ? to ?]

New York State Department of Labor [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 2000 to 2008]

Investigator

New York State Public Employees Federation Union [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1980 to 2001]

Director of Field Services

New York City Council [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 2001 to 2013]

Councilman

Malcolm X and Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Tenant's Association [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

CDC of Northern Manhattan [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

P.S./I.S. 187 Parent Association [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Muslim Democratic Club of New York [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Barack Obama Democratic Club of Upper Manhattan [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Community School Board 6 [MEMBEROF]
[from 1986 to ?]

Member

Community School Board 6 [MEMBEROF]
[from 1992 to ?]

President

Campaign for Fiscal Equality [MEMBEROF]
[from 1992 to ?]

Founder