

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Delano Stewart

PERSON

Stewart, Delano, 1935-

Alternative Names: Delano Stewart;

Life Dates: November 9, 1935-

Place of Birth: Tampa, Florida, USA

Residence: Thonotosassa, FL

Occupations: Lawyer

Biographical Note

Lawyer Delano Stewart was born on November 9, 1935 in Tampa, Florida to Beatrice Hill Stewart and Garland V. Stewart. He went on to earn his B.A degree in political science at his father's alma mater, Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia. From there, he attended Howard University School of Law in Washington, D.C., during which time he attended the March on Washington in 1963. He also served in the U.S. Air Force. Upon graduating in 1964, Stewart returned to Tampa, Florida, where he became the first African American board member for the Hillsborough County Young Democrats.

After graduating from Howard's Law School, Stewart returned to Tampa to enter private practice with Francisco Rodriguez and S.J. Kenneth Rogers. Stewart also became the first African American Assistant Public Defender for the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit in Hillsborough County. Stewart expanded his law practice to add fellow Howard Law graduate George Edgecomb and Arthenia Joyner, the first African American female to practice law in Hillsborough County. Edgecomb became Tampa's first African American assistant state attorney and county court judge. The local George Edgecomb Bar Association bears his name and awards the Delano Stewart Diversity Award annually. In 1970, Stewart became the first attorney to head an integrated law firm in Florida. His civil rights and activist clients included Otha Favors (Askia Muhammad Aquil) and Connie Tucker. In 1967, Stewart played a critical role when the riots in Tampa ensued after the shooting of teenager Martin Chambers by a white police officer. After fifty years of practicing law, Stewart retired in 2015.

Stewart had a stellar career as a criminal and civil trial lawyer. He served as the first president of the George Edgecomb Bar Association from 1982 to 1983. Stewart was elected as the first African American on the Hillsborough County Bar Association Board of Directors. He continued his community and political activism by running for

the Florida House of Representatives in 1966 and Tampa City Council in 1970. Undeterred by these unsuccessful races, he continued to spend his Saturdays registering African American voters. Stewart is a Founder of the Tampa Organization of Black Affairs (1980), and the first African American member of the Rough Riders civic organization, of which he is a life member. He is also a member of the National Bar Association's Hall of Fame.

Stewart is married to Carolyn House Stewart, who was the first African American female assistant state's attorney in Hillsborough County. He has six daughters, eight grandchildren, and one great grandson.

Delano Stewart was interviewed The HistoryMakers on September 10, 2018.

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