

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Carrie P. Meek

PERSON

Meek, Carrie P., 1926-

Alternative Names: The Honorable Carrie P. Meek;

Life Dates: April 29, 1926-

Place of Birth: Tallahassee, Florida, USA

Residence: Miami, FL

Occupations: U.S. Congresswoman

Biographical Note

Former Congresswoman Carrie Meek was born on April 29, 1926, in Tallahassee, Florida. The granddaughter of a slave and the daughter of former sharecroppers, she spent her childhood in segregated Tallahassee. Meek graduated from Florida A&M University in 1946. At this time, African Americans could not attend graduate school in Florida, so Meek

traveled north to continue her studies and graduated from the University of Michigan with an M.S. in 1948.

After graduation, Meek was hired as a teacher at Bethune Cookman College in Daytona Beach, Florida, and then at her alma mater, Florida A&M University. Meek moved to Miami in 1961 to serve as special assistant to the vice president of Miami-Dade Community College. The school was desegregated in 1963 and Meek played a central role in pushing for integration. Throughout her years as an educator, Meek was also active in community projects in the Miami area.

Elected as a Florida state representative in 1979, Meek was the first African American female elected to the Florida State Senate in 1982. As a state senator, Meek served on the Education Appropriations Subcommittee. Her efforts in the legislature also led to the construction of thousands of affordable rental housing units.

In 1992, Meek was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Florida's 17th Congressional District. This made her the first black lawmaker elected to represent Florida in Congress since Reconstruction. Upon taking office, Meek faced the task of helping her district recover from Hurricane Andrew's devastation. Her efforts helped to provide \$100 million in federal assistance to rebuild Dade County. Successfully focusing her attention on issues such as economic development, health care, education and housing, Meek led legislation through Congress to improve Dade County's transit system, airport and seaport; construct a new family and childcare center in North Dade County; and fund advanced aviation training programs at Miami-Dade Community College. Meek has also emerged as a strong advocate for senior citizens and Haitian immigrants.

Meek has received numerous awards and honors. She is the recipient of honorary doctor of laws degrees

from the University of Miami, Florida A&M University, Barry University, Florida Atlantic University and Rollins University. Meek was a member of the powerful House Appropriations Committee, in addition to serving on the Subcommittee on Treasury, Postal Service and General Government and the Subcommittee on VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies.

Related Entries

Bethune Cookman College [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2004 to ?]

Teacher

Florida House of Representatives [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1979 to ?]

State Representative

Florida State Senate [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1982 to ?]

State Senator

United States House of Representatives [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1992 to ?]

U.S. Representative