

# **Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Bishop William L. Sheals**

PERSON

**Sheals, William L., 1947-**

**Alternative Names:** Bishop William L. Sheals;

**Life Dates:** January 15, 1947-

**Place of Birth:** Lakeland, Florida, USA

**Residence:** Alpharetta, GA

**Work:** Norcross, GA

**Occupations:** City Government Official; Pastor

## **Biographical Note**

Teacher, preacher and evangelist, Dr. William L. Sheals has been the Senior Pastor of Hopewell Baptist Church in Norcross, Georgia since 1980. He received a business degree from New York University and holds theological degrees from Florida Memorial Seminary

and International Bible College.

Sheals' experience in the business world includes acting as the former Vice President of the Mortgage Department of Carver Federal Savings and Loan Association in Harlem, New York. Subsequently, he managed the branch office of Beneficial Financial Company in the Bronx and worked as a disc jockey, a concert promoter and an actor and director off-Broadway. In Florida, he served as the Assistant Director of the Lakeland Housing Authority while pursuing his advanced studies there. He moved to Atlanta in 1979 to work as the Assistant Director of the Atlanta Housing Authority, but left the position after ten years to devote himself entirely to the rapidly-growing Hopewell Baptist Church, which was founded by former slaves after the Civil War.

Under Sheals' direction since 1980, Hopewell has grown from a two-acre, one-building facility with 200 members to a thirty-acre campus called "The City of Hope," with a membership of nearly 17,000, including over 60 ministries and auxiliaries. The City of Hope includes a senior citizens facility, a 500-member youth church, a child development center, a Christian Academy that teaches pre-school through eighth grade and a Bible College.

Sheals' leadership and civic service has been honored with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Drum Major Award for Community Service (1999) the Civic Leader of the Year Award, Gwinnet County (1995) the African American Community Service Award (1994) the Outstanding Humanitarian Award, National Kidney Foundation (1988) and the Presidential "Special Citizen" Award for acting as Director of "Ministries Against Drugs" (1989). He is the founding President of the North Metro 100 Black Men and member of the United Way Special Committee, the Rotary Club, the Human Relations Commission and the Mayor's Advisory Council.

## **Related Entries**

**Carver Federal Savings & Loan** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Vice President**

**Beneficial Financial Company** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1978 to 1995]

**Lakeland, Florida Housing Authority** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 2007 to ?]

**Assistant Director**

**Atlanta Housing Authority** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1970 to 1982]

**Assistant Director**

**Hopewell Baptist Church** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1989 to ?]

**Senior Pastor**

**Concerned Black Men of North Metro** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 1989 to 1992]

**Founder**

**100 Black Men of North Metro Atlanta** [MEMBEROF]  
[from 1992 to 1997]

**President**