

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Calvin Smyre

PERSON

**Smyre, Calvin, 1947-**

**Alternative Names:** The Honorable Calvin Smyre;

**Life Dates:** May 17, 1947-

**Place of Birth:** Columbus, Georgia, USA

**Work:** Columbus, GA

**Occupations:** State Representative

## Biographical Note

State Representative of Georgia, Calvin Smyre was born on May 17, 1947. Smyre studied business administration at Fort Valley State University, where he earned his B.S.

In 1974, at the age of twenty-six, Smyre was elected to the Georgia State House of Representatives, as its

youngest member at the time. He is known for his early efforts as an organizer and director of the "War on Poverty" program. In 1986, Governor Joe Frank Harris appointed Smyre the floor leader. It was the first time a black representative held this position in Georgia. Smyre sponsored successful legislation on the construction of the Georgia Dome, the honoring of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday as a state holiday and the fight to remove the Confederate battle emblem from the state flag. He has served as a member of state house committees on appropriations, ethics, higher education and special rules. As Chairman of the House Rules Committee, he steered hundreds of successful bills to the full House, including stiffer restrictions on teen and drunken drivers.

Smyre has also been active on a national level, acting as a delegate to every Democratic National Convention since 1980. In 1984, he was the first African American from Georgia elected to the Democratic National Committee. As campaign chairman and advisor, he helped Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton win their presidential campaigns. He also served as an adviser to former Vice President Al Gore during Gore's run for president in 2000.

Smyre has also been a key figure in the world of finance. He is the executive vice president of corporate affairs for Synovus Financial Corporation, a multi-financial services company with more than \$14.9 billion in assets. He is also the chairman, CEO of the Synovus Foundation. He acts as the secretary of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators. He sits on the Board of Trustees of the Medical College of Georgia Foundation; the Morehouse School of Medicine; the Jack D. Hughston Foundation and the Fort Valley State University Foundation as its Chair.

## **Related Entries**

**Claffin Elementary School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Cusseta Road Elementary School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Marshall Junior High School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Marshall Junior High School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**William Henry Spencer High School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Clark University** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Fort Valley State University** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**B.S.**

**Marshall Middle School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**William Henry Spencer High School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Ford Motor Company** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1970 to 1972]

**Account Executive**

**Swift Textiles, Inc.** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1972 to 1974]

**Director of Employee Relations**

**George House of Representatives** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1974 to ?]

**Synovus Financial Corp.** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1976 to ?]

**Vice president**