Hatcher, Richard G., 1933-

**Alternative Names:** The Honorable Richard Hatcher;

**Life Dates:** July 10, 1933-December 13, 2019

**Place of Birth:** Michigan City, Indiana, USA

**Residence:** Gary, IN

**Work:** Bloomington, IN

**Occupations:** Law Professor; Mayor

**Biographical Note**

Successful politician, social servant and educator Richard Gordon Hatcher was born on July 10, 1933, in Michigan City, Indiana. He received a B.S. degree in business and government from Indiana University in 1956, and a bachelor of law with honors in criminal law from Valparaiso University in 1959. Hatcher served as a law professor at Indiana University from 1961 to 1964, and later as mayor of Gary, Indiana, from 1969 to 1977. He was a member of the Democratic Party and is known for his advocacy for civil rights and urban development.
law and a J.D. from Valparaiso University School of Law in 1959.

After moving to Gary, Indiana, Hatcher began practicing law in East Chicago, Indiana. In 1961, he began serving as a deputy prosecutor for Lake County, Indiana, until he was elected to Gary's City Council in 1963. He was the first and only freshman elected president of the City Council in Gary's history. When he was elected as mayor of Gary in 1967, Hatcher was the first African American mayor of a major U.S. city. He remained in office for an unprecedented five terms, until 1987, when he was defeated in a bid for a sixth term. During his twenty years as mayor, Hatcher was known for developing innovative approaches to urban problems and for being a national and international spokesman for civil rights, minorities, the poor and America's cities.

In 1988, Hatcher started his own consulting firm, R. Gordon Hatcher & Associates. From 1988 to 1989, he worked as an Institute of Politics fellow at Harvard University's Kennedy School. He also began teaching political science at Roosevelt University in 1989 and then at Valparaiso University, where he is a senior research professor, in 1991. In the summer of 1996, Hatcher taught a law course at Cambridge University in England, and since 1989 he has worked as an adjunct professor at Indiana University. As a long time friend and advisor to the Reverend Jesse Jackson, Hatcher also played a leading role in Jackson's bids for the presidency as campaign chairman in 1984 and an adviser in 1988. Hatcher has authored numerous articles about urban affairs, civil rights, politics and law and has been working on a book. Hatcher has many affiliations and memberships with various civic, urban, political and civil rights organizations and has received a myriad of awards and honors for his lifetime of dedication to his community.

Hatcher passed away on December 13, 2019.
The Honorable Richard Hatcher was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on December 11, 2002.

Related Entries

Park Elementary School [STUDENT OF]  
[from ? to ?]

Elston Middle School [STUDENT OF]  
[from ? to ?]

Indiana University [STUDENT OF]  
[from ? to ?]

B.S.

Valparaiso University School of Law [STUDENT OF]  
[from ? to ?]

J.D.

Harvard University Kennedy School [EMPLOYEE OF]  
[from ? to ?]

Institute of Politics Fellow

Lake County, Indiana [EMPLOYEE OF]  
[from 1961 to 1963]

Deputy Prosecutor

Gary Common Council [EMPLOYEE OF]  
[from 2006 to 2011]

City Councilman

City of Gary, Indiana [EMPLOYEE OF]  
[from 196409 to 197008]

Mayor of Gary

R. Gordon Hatcher & Associates [EMPLOYEE OF]  
[from 1988 to ?]
Founder

Roosevelt University [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1989 to ?]

Professor

Indiana University [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1989 to ?]

Adjunct Professor

Valparaiso University [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1991 to ?]

Senior Research Professor

Cambridge University [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1996 to ?]

Instructor