

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Ronald Dellums

PERSON

Dellums, Ronald V., 1935-

Alternative Names: The Honorable Ronald Dellums;

Life Dates: November 24, 1935-July 30, 2018

Place of Birth: Oakland, California, USA

Work: Washington, DC

Occupations: U.S. Congressman

Biographical Note

Former Congressman Ronald V. Dellums was born November 24, 1935, in Oakland, California. After graduating from high school, Dellums joined the U.S. Marine Corps, where he was selected for Officer Candidate School. After completing his tour, Dellums went to Oakland City College, where he earned his A.A. degree. Dellums later went to San Francisco State University and then to the University of California, Berkeley, where he earned his M.A. degree in social work.

After completing his master's degree, Dellums went to work with the California Department of Mental Hygiene as a psychiatric social worker in 1962 and remained there for two years. Dellums was hired as the program director of the Bayview Community Center in 1964, and a year later became the associate director and, later, director of Hunters Point Youth Opportunity Center. In 1967, Dellums was elected to the Berkeley City Council, and also began work as a part-time lecturer at San Francisco State College and the Berkeley Graduate School of Social Welfare. Dellums was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1971, where he served until his retirement in 1998.

As a congressman during the Vietnam War, Dellums began calling for peace and disarmament; he studied foreign and military policy, and served on the Armed Services Committee. During the course of the war, President Richard Nixon and Vice President Spiro Agnew accused Dellums of being a "radical" and a "commie pinko" for his views. Surviving these attacks, Dellums went on to challenge President Ronald Reagan's desire to increase military spending and later required President George Bush to secure congressional approval before attacking Iraq in the Gulf War. Dellums also proposed a national healthcare bill in 1977 and spent years trying to push it through Congress.

Dellums continued to speak about disarmament and finding peaceful solutions to international conflicts; he also maintained a strong interest in civil rights and environmental issues. Dellums authored several books, including his autobiography, *Lying Down With the Lions: A Public Life from the Streets of Oakland to the Halls of Power*. Dellums served as the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, and the University of California, Berkeley, has created an endowed chair in his name in the Peace and Conflict Studies Department.

Dellums was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on March 13, 2003, February 15, 2013 and June 17, 2013.

Ronald Dellums passed away on July 30, 2018.

Related Entries

Westlake Middle School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

McClymonds High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Oakland Technical High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Laney College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

San Francisco State University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

University of California, Berkeley [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

University of California, Berkeley [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Lecturer

United States Marine Corps [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Healthcare International Management Company [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

California Department of Mental Hygiene [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1978 to 1982]

Social Worker

Bayview Community Center [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1980 to 1987]

Program Director

Hunters Point Youth Opportunity Center [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1965 to ?]

Director

Berkeley City Council [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 2013 to ?]

Councilman

San Francisco State College [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1967 to ?]

Lecturer

United States House of Representatives [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 1971 to 1998]

U.S. Representative

City of Oakland, California [EMPLOYEEOf]
[from 2006 to ?]

Mayor

Congressional Black Caucus [MEMBEROf]
[from ? to ?]

Member