

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Chester Blair

PERSON

Blair, Chester L., 1928-2015

Alternative Names: Chester Blair;

Life Dates: July 2, 1928-March 16, 2015

Place of Birth: Streetman, Texas, USA

Residence: Chicago, IL

Occupations: Trial Lawyer

Biographical Note

Attorney Chester L. Blair was born in Streetman, Texas on July 2, 1928. Blair left home at an early age to seek greater opportunity in the state of Washington. After falling ill from manual labor, Blair returned to Texas to complete high school. Deciding that he wanted to become a lawyer, he arrived in Chicago in April 1947 with a letter of introduction to the famous lawyer Euclid Taylor.

After working as a busboy and attending Fisk

University for one year, Blair was hired by the post office and transferred to Chicago State University. He received his B.Ed. in 1952 and taught for the Chicago Public Schools for seven years. While teaching, he pursued master's level work at Roosevelt University and went on to earn a J.D. in 1959 from the John Marshall Law School, where he excelled in real estate law.

Upon completing his law degree, Blair went into private practice as a partner in Blair & Cole. His practice included criminal defense and personal injury cases. Blair became the first African American president of the Chicago Bar Association.

Throughout his career, Blair had served on numerous advisory committees for the Illinois Supreme Court and the American Bar Association. He was a member and former president of the Cook County Bar Association and a member of both the Illinois State Bar Association and the Illinois Trial Lawyers Association. He served on the boards of the Illinois Institute for Continuing Legal Education and the Chicago Bar Foundation. He was named a fellow of the American Bar Foundation in 1987. Blair had been a lecturer and professor for the Association of Trial Lawyers of America. From 1984 to 1998, he wrote a weekly column for the Chicago Daily Defender.

Blair passed away on March 16, 2015 at the age of 86.

Related Entries

Fisk University [STUDENTOF]
[\[from ? to ?\]](#)

Chicago State University [STUDENTOF]
[\[from ? to ?\]](#)

B.Ed.

John Marshall Law School [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

J.D.

Chicago Public Schools [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 2005 to ?]

Teacher

Blair & Cole [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1959 to ?]

Partner

Chicago Defender [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1984 to 1988]

Columnist

Chicago Bar Association [MEMBEROF]

[from ? to ?]

President

Chicago Bar Association [MEMBEROF]

[from 1959 to 2015]

Member