

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Carl Snowden

PERSON

**Snowden, Carl O., 1953-**

**Alternative Names:** The Honorable Carl Snowden;

**Life Dates:** June 17, 1953-

**Place of Birth:** Baltimore, Maryland, USA

**Residence:** Annapolis, MD

**Work:** Anapolis, MD

**Occupations:** Civil Rights Activist; City Government  
Official

## Biographical Note

Civil rights activist and politician Carl Snowden was born on June 17, 1953, to Ora and William Snowden, in Baltimore, Maryland, and was raised in Annapolis, Maryland, where he attended Annapolis Elementary

School. As a student, Snowden was greatly influenced by The Autobiography of Malcolm X. In 1970, Snowden, along with fourteen other students, were expelled from Annapolis High School after they boycotted classes to protest the school's lack of African American teachers and African American studies courses. Local benefactors raised funds for him to attend the private Key School. While still a young adult, Snowden organized an African American group called VOTE.

1976, Snowden successfully sued the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for illegally spying on him through the COINTELPRO program, which was established by the FBI to keep activists under surveillance. Snowden was kept under surveillance by the FBI from the age of 16 until 24. Snowden was awarded \$10,000 and the FBI was required to expunge his files. Snowden received his M.A. degree in human services from Lincoln University in 1985.

In 1982, Snowden founded Carl Snowden & Associates, a private civil rights firm that specialized in civil rights issues. After building a reputation as a leading civil rights activist, Snowden was elected to serve as representative for the majority black Fifth Ward on the Annapolis City Council in 1985. As alderman, Snowden introduced landmark legislation that prohibited private clubs from discriminating against people based on their race, color, gender, and national origin; and also passed legislation prohibiting stalking and sexual harassment. Snowden then spearheaded the removal of Arthur G. Strissel, Jr. from the position of executive director of the Annapolis Housing Authority after he was charged and convicted of bribery and fraud. In 1988, Snowden founded the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Committee, Inc., which hosts an annual Awards Dinner honoring people who, through their deeds, words, and actions, help to keep Dr. King's legacy alive. Following Snowden's unsuccessful run for mayor of the City of Annapolis, Snowden worked for Governor Parris N. Glendening

as an administrator in the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services and as the president for the Anne Arundel County Economic Opportunity Committee. In 2007, the State of Maryland Attorney General Douglas F. Gansler appointed Snowden as the first Director of the Civil Rights Program. While there, Snowden campaigned for civil rights for all people and led an investigation into the Annapolis Housing Authority's banning practices.

Snowden has campaigned for numerous local candidates, including Janet S. Owens, the first woman elected as county executive in Anne Arundel County, Maryland; and Annapolis Mayor Josh Cohen. Snowden, who spearheaded a successful two-year \$800 thousand capital fund campaign to create the first Coretta Scott King Memorial Garden and the first Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial in the State of Maryland. Snowden was honored with an award at the 23rd Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Awards Dinner in Glen Burnie, Maryland in 2011.

Carl Snowden was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on December 9, 2011.

## **Related Entries**

**Lincoln University** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**MHS**

**Annapolis Elementary School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Annapolis Junior High School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Annapolis High School** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Howard University** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**University of the District of Columbia** [STUDENTOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Office of the Attorney General of Maryland**

[EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Director**

**Office of the County Executive - Anne Arundel  
County** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Intergovernmental Relations Officer**

**Annapolis City Council** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from ? to ?]

**Councilman**

**Carl Snowden & Associates** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1986 to 1992]

**President and CEO**

**Community Viewpoint** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1968 to ?]

**Radio host**

**Community Action Agency** [EMPLOYEEOF]

[from 1975 to 1984]

**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee, Inc.**

[MEMBEROF]

[from 1983 to ?]

**President**

**Anne Arundel County Economic Opportunity  
Committee** [MEMBEROF]

[from 1993 to 1996]

**President**

**National Association for the Advancement of Colored  
People (NAACP) [MEMBEROF]**  
[from 1983 to ?]

**Member**