

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable William "Mo" Cowan

PERSON

Cowan, William Maurice,
1969-

Alternative Names: The Honorable William "Mo"
Cowan;

Life Dates: April 4, 1969-

Place of Birth: Yadkinville, North Carolina, USA

Residence: Westwood, MA

Work: Boston, MA

Occupations: Lawyer;

Biographical Note

Lawyer and political leader William "Mo" Cowan was born on April 4, 1969 in Yadkinville, North Carolina to

machinist William Hall and seamstress Cynthia Cowan. In 1987, Cowan graduated from Forbush High School in East Bend, North Carolina. He earned his A.B. degree in sociology from Duke University in Durham, North Carolina; and received his J.D. degree from Northeastern University School of Law in Boston, Massachusetts in 1994.

From 1997 to 2009, Cowan served on the litigation team at the law firm of Mintz Levin in Boston, Massachusetts, eventually becoming a partner. He served as an advisor to both Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney and Middlesex District Attorney Gerard T. Leone Jr. In 2009, he became chief legal counsel to Massachusetts Governor Deval L. Patrick, where he oversaw all legal operations for the Governor's office. Cowan then served as Governor Patrick's chief of staff in 2011, where he helped develop the governor's budget and pass legislation like the Expanded Gaming Act. Governor Patrick then appointed Cowan as interim United States Senator until July 15, 2013. Cowan was the second African American senator to represent Massachusetts, as well as the first African American U.S. Senator to serve concurrently with another African American senator. Cowan chaired the Subcommittee on Nutrition, Specialty Crops, Food and Agricultural Research, and sponsored several bills during his service. After his time in the U.S. Senate, Cowan joined the Boston law firm of Mintz Levin as counsel, and served as president and chief executive officer of ML Strategies, LLC.

Cowan was a fellow at the Harvard University Institute of Politics in 2013. He also served as president of the Massachusetts Black Lawyers Association, president of Northeastern University's School of Law Alumni/ae Association Board of Directors, and as an active member of the United States Association of Former Members of Congress. Cowan sat on the Board of Trustees at Northeastern University, Massachusetts General Hospital, and The Chesnut School.

Cowan was named one of Boston's Business Journal's "40 Under 40," and one of "Massachusetts Super Lawyers." In addition to being awarded the Good Guy Award from the Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus, he received the Building A Better Boston Award from the UMass-Boston Center for Collaborative Leadership, and the Paul Robeson National Leadership Award from the Concerned Black Men of Massachusetts.

Cowan and his wife, Stacy Cowan, have two sons, Miles and Grant.

William "Mo" Cowan was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on October 20, 2016.

Related Entries

Courtney Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

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

High School Diploma

Northeastern University School of Law [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

J.D.

Duke University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

B.S.

Peabody and Arnold Law Firm [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1994 to 1997]

Associate

Mintz Levin [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1997 to 2009]

Associate; Litigation Attorney

Middlesex County District Attorney Office [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2000 to 2000]

Special Assistant

Massachusetts State Government [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2009 to 2013]

Chief Legal Counsel to Gov. Deval Patrick

United States Government [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2013 to 2013]

Interim United States Senator - Massachusetts

ML Strategies [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2016 to ?]

President and CEO

**Anti-Money Laundering Compliance and Counseling
practice group** [MEMBEROF]
[from ? to ?]

Chair

**Northeastern University's School of Law Alumni
Association** [MEMBEROF]
[from 1999 to 2000]

President

Massachusetts Black Lawyers Association [MEMBEROF]
[from 2000 to ?]

President