



Senator Royce West: A Lifetime of Service

Senator Royce West has spent a lifetime in public service serving the people of Dallas County and the state of Texas.

Born in Annapolis, Maryland to a military family, Senator West's father and grandfather both served in the armed forces. His grandfather is believed to have been among the first African American Chief Machinist Mates in the United States Navy. Another grandfather lived in the Greenwood neighborhood of Tulsa, and saw the area destroyed by the 1921 Tulsa Race Riots.

Senator West decided on law as a career path early on in life. In the 7th grade, a teacher encouraged him to take this path after a classroom presentation.

Always a leader, even in his adolescence, Senator West helped integrate his high school football team and ultimately received and accepted an offer to play football in college.

Senator West was President of the student body at the University of Texas at Arlington, and was the first African American to serve in that position. While president of the student body, his ability to build coalitions to get things done got its first major test when he crafted and executed a plan to find and develop other revenue sources for student government programs. His on campus apartment selector program was so successful at placing students in housing that apartment locating businesses asked state regulators to shut it down.

After earning his bachelor's degree, Senator West was admitted to the University of Houston School of Law where he received his juris doctorate. The same year he received his law degree, he also received his Master of Arts from UT-Arlington.

After working briefly for the Harris County District Attorney's Office, Senator West returned home to Dallas, and became an assistant district attorney in Dallas County, eventually rising

to the ranks of Chief Felony Prosecutor--the first minority to hold that position in Dallas County history. Senator West's time as a prosecutor has influenced his outlook on the criminal justice system and restorative justice issues throughout this life.

Following his service in the DA's office, Senator West opened a private practice, which today is West and Associates, LLP, among the largest minority-owned law firms in Texas. Senator West's practices public finance, ad valorem tax collection and education law. He has been an attorney on a number of nationally-known cases, including representing Dallas' Carter High School students and parents during an eligibility controversy that was later highlighted in the best-selling book *Friday Night Lights*, in the ESPN 30 for 30 documentary series, "What Carter Lost," and in the feature film "Carter High."

In 1992, the State Senate seat Senator West currently holds came open, and Senator West won the Democratic Primary and general election to take the seat, which he has held since 1993. During his tenure in the Texas Senate, Senator West has served on a number of committees including but not limited to, Finance, Higher Education, Education, Criminal Justice, and Health and Human Services.

While serving in the Texas Senate, Senator West has led the way on many major legislative changes in Texas. He authored both the dashcam and body camera laws for Texas police officers, and his legislation (the Community Safety Education Act) relating to how police officers interact with the public has become a national model for similar legislation.

His leadership in higher education has provided both public and private HBCUs money for programs and financial assistance for students.

In addition, he is responsible for bringing the city of Dallas its first public university and first public law school. Senator West is responsible for legislation that gives grandparents, aunts, and uncles caring for children in their families who would otherwise be in foster care a monthly stipend. He also played a leadership role in securing pay raise for Texas teachers, and has been a steadfast protector of Texans' constitutional rights relating to women's healthcare, voter identification, redistricting, and more.

He and his wife, Carol, reside in DeSoto, Texas. Senator West is a proud father and grandfather.