

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Mary Flowers

PERSON

Flowers, Mary Evelyn, 1951-

Alternative Names: The Honorable Mary Flowers;

Life Dates: July 31, 1951-

Place of Birth: Inverness, Mississippi, USA

Residence: Springfield, IL

Work: Chicago, IL

Occupations: State Representative

Biographical Note

Mary Evelyn Flowers was born on July 31, 1951, in Inverness, Mississippi. As a child, she moved with her family to Chicago, Illinois, where she attended Simeon High School. Upon graduation in 1970, Flowers enrolled at Kennedy-King College in Chicago before transferring to the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle Campus. After receiving her degree, Flowers held a series of positions with her alma mater before assuming the position of Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs, which she held from 1977 to 1979.

Flowers' career in politics began as a volunteer for the mayoral campaign of Harold Washington. In 1985, she was elected to the Illinois House of Representatives from Chicago's 31st District. As a member of the state legislature, Flowers has been instrumental in passing considerable health care and children's rights legislation. She also sponsored the Illinois Managed Care Act, which was signed into law.

Flowers spearheaded the renaming of the Calumet Expressway after Bishop Louis Henry Ford, making the Bishop Ford Highway the first expressway to be named after an African American. She has sponsored legislation to keep public pension funds from being invested in apartheid-era South Africa as well as legislation requiring sensitivity training for police officers in Illinois. Flowers served as Chairperson for the Committee On Health Care Availability and Access.

Married to Daniel Coutee, Flowers is the mother of one daughter, Makeda. She was the recipient of several award and honors, including "Legislator of the Year" from the Community Behavior Healthcare Association of Illinois and the "Legislative

Appreciation Award” bestowed by the Chicago Teachers Union.

Related Entries

Simeon Career Academy [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Kennedy–King College [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

University of Illinois, Chicago [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1977 to 1979]

Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Illinois General Assembly [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1985 to ?]

State Representative