

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Charles Yancey

PERSON

Yancey, Charles, 1948-

Alternative Names: The Honorable Charles Yancey;

Life Dates: December 28, 1948-

Place of Birth: Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Residence: Dorchester Center, MA

Occupations: City Government Official; Civic Leader

Biographical Note

Boston city councilman Charles Calvin Yancey was born on December 28, 1948, the sixth of nine children of Howell Yancey, Sr. and Alice W. Yancey. He grew up in Boston's Roxbury neighborhood where, at the age of twelve, he wrote a letter to the Mayor of Boston requesting that a vacant lot across the street from his home be turned into a playground. The playground became Yancey's first political success. Yancey graduated from Boston Technical High School in 1965. Yancey received his B.S. degree in economics from Tufts University in 1970 and his M.A. degree in public administration from Harvard University in 1991. Attending Tufts during the height of the Civil Rights Movement, Yancey founded the Afro-American Society and the African American Cultural Center at Tufts.

In the 1970s, Yancey co-founded the Community for Human Rights. Before his election to the Boston City Council, Yancey worked with the Urban Finance Division of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and the UDI Community Development Corporation in Durham, North Carolina.

Yancey, a lifelong resident of Boston, Massachusetts, was first elected to the Boston City Council in 1983. He is the longest serving elected public official in the history of Boston politics. He served as president of the Boston City Council in 2001 and the National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials in 1999.

Yancey also served as Chair of the Council's Committee of Employment and Workforce Development and Finance Services and Community Investment.

Yancey championed equal employment opportunity for "people of color" in the city government. The annual Charles C. Yancey Book Fair has provided over 100,000 free

books for Boston children since its beginning in February 1987. Yancey gained national and international attention in 1984 for his involvement in the Free South Africa Movement. He also established a Sister City relationship between Boston and Sekondi-Takoradi in Ghana, West Africa.

Yancey and his wife Marzetta (married in 1970) are the parents of three sons, Charles, Jr. (born in 1970); Derrick (born in 1972); Sharif (born in 1977); and a daughter Ashley (born in 1987).

Related Entries

Phillips Brooks Elementary School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

The John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Martin Luther King, Jr. K-8 Inclusion School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Tufts University [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

UDI Community Development Corporation [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Consultant

Executive Office of Communities and Development [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Metropolitan Area Planning Council [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from ? to ?]

Administrator

Community for Human Rights [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1970 to ?]

Founder

Federal Reserve Bank of Boston [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1970 to ?]

Urban Finance

Boston City Council [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1984 to 2015]

Councilor

Boston City Council [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 2001 to 2002]

President

