

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Sylvester Small

PERSON

Small, Sylvester, 1947-

Alternative Names: Sylvester Small;

Life Dates: February 26, 1947-

Place of Birth: Akron, Ohio, USA

Residence: Port Saint Lucie, FL

Occupations: School Superintendent

Biographical Note

Dr. Sylvester Small, Superintendent of the Akron, Ohio Public Schools, was born on February 26, 1947 in Akron, Ohio, the third of six brothers. Both of his parents migrated from segregated Clarksdale, Mississippi to Akron. They instilled in him the value of every life experience as an educational experience. Graduating from Hower Vocational High School in 1965, Small worked a variety of jobs to raise money to attend college and stay out of the Vietnam War. Inspired by the dedicated teachers he encountered as a student, Small intended to become a schoolteacher. In 1966 he enrolled in the University of Akron and by 1971 he was teaching in the Akron Public Schools. Sylvester Small continued his postgraduate education at the University of Akron, earning his Masters in 1976 and his Ed. D. in 1984.

For the past 32 years, Sylvester Small has served as a substitute teacher, teacher, board administrator, assistant principal and principal at both the elementary and secondary levels. He also took on the roles of urban demonstration project teacher, social studies curriculum specialist, coordinator of student services, and assistant superintendent of for curriculum and instruction. When Akron sought a new Superintendent of Schools in 2001 Small, with the support of the community was elevated to the role of Superintendent of the Akron Public Schools.

Superintendent Small, assisted by 4,000 administrators, teachers, counselors, librarians, and other personnel, was accountable for the administration and distribution of \$334,814,771 during 2001/2002. His vision for the Akron Public Schools is a world - class, student - focused, community - based learning system. On October 15, 2001 Small guided the city and school board to the table to sign a Contract With The Community, pledging to accomplish a broad range of goals.

An active participant in community and professional organizations, Small is a member of the NAACP, Leadership Akron, the Coming Together Project, the Akron Alliance of Black School Educators and the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. He is the recipient of many awards including the Harold K. Stubbs Humanitarian Award for Distinguished Service in Education and the Outstanding Professional Person of the Year Award from the National Association of Negro Business and Professional Women's Club. Small retired from his superintendent position on July 31, 2007. A lifelong resident of Akron, Dr. Sylvester Small lives there with his wife, Elaine.

Related Entries

Hower Vocational High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Thornton Junior High School [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

University of Akron [STUDENTOF]
[from ? to ?]

Akron Public Schools [EMPLOYEEOF]
[from 1971 to 2007]

Substitute Teacher, Teacher, Board Administrator, Assistant Principal and Principal