

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable Yvonne Atkinson Gates

PERSON

Gates, Yvonne Atkinson, 1956-

**Alternative Names:** The Honorable Yvonne Atkinson Gates;

**Life Dates:** June 10, 1956-

**Place of Birth:** Henderson, Nevada, USA

**Residence:** Boulder, CO

**Work:** Las Vegas, CO

**Occupations:** County Commissioner

## Biographical Note

Political leader Yvonne Atkinson Gates was born on June 10, 1956 in Henderson, Nevada to Bobbie Davis Atkinson and Eddie Atkinson. Gates graduated from Ed W. Clark High School in Las Vegas and went on to earn her B.S. degree in political science and journalism in 1979, her M.P.A. degree in 1982, and her Ph.D. degree in public administration in 2012, all from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Following her graduation from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Gates worked as the research and planning manager for Clark County's Department of Social Service, as well as personnel manager for Clark County's Department of Aviation. From 1985 to 1992, Gates served on the Clark County School District Board of Trustees in Las Vegas. In 1992, Gates was elected as the youngest and only minority member to serve on the Clark County Board of Commissioners for District D in Las Vegas, becoming its first African American female chair in 1995. She was chosen as a super-delegate for the Democratic National Committee; and, in 2002, she chaired the Democratic National Committee Black Caucus. As chairwoman, she worked with black female elected officials like Donna Brazile and Minyon Moore to found the Women Building for the Future Political Action Committee. Throughout her political career, Gates advocated for strengthening public education and daycare programs nationwide. After resigning from the Clark County Board of Commissioners in 2007, Gates was appointed by Senator Harry Reid to serve as a Democratic National Committee super-delegate in 2008 for Hillary Rodham Clinton, although Gates later shifted her support to Barack Obama. In addition to her political career, Gates founded the construction firm of ECO

Construction LLC in Las Vegas.

Gates was a recipient of the Community Image Award from the Professional Black Women Alliance in 1989, and a recipient of the Community Service Award from the Westcoast Black Publisher's Association in 1990. In recognition of her public service, the Clark County Board of School Trustees opened the Yvonne Atkinson Gates Center in 1996. In 1997, Gates was named Outstanding Democrat of the Year by the Democratic Party of Nevada. In 2002, she received an Eleanor Roosevelt Award from the DNC Women's Vote Center; and in 2006, she received a human rights award from Church Women United.

Gates and her husband, former Judge Lee Gates, have four children.

Yvonne Atkinson Gates was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on September 25, 2016.

## Related Entries

**Madison Elementary School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**William E. Orr Middle School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Ed W. Clark High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**University of Nevada, Las Vegas** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Bachelor of Art**

**University of Nevada, Las Vegas** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**University of Nevada, Las Vegas** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Master of Public Administration**

[EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**ECO Construction, LLC** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 20060823 to 20151230]

**Owner**

**State of Nevada** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1977 to 1977]

**Intern**

**City of Las Vegas** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 1978 to 1979]

**Management Analyst**

**Clark County, Nevada** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 1980 to ?]

**Various Positions**

**University of Nevada, Las Vegas** [EMPLOYEEOf]  
[from 2000 to 2006]

**Deputy Director**

**Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority** [MEMBEROf]  
[from 197604 to ?]

**Member**

**American Society for Public Administration** [MEMBEROf]  
[from 198209 to ?]

**Member**

**National Association of School Boards** [MEMBEROf]  
[from 1985 to ?]

**Member**

**NAACP** [MEMBEROf]  
[from 1993 to ?]

**Member**

**Las Vegas Rotary International** [MEMBEROf]  
[from 2003 to ?]

**Member**