

Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with The Honorable David A. Paterson

PERSON

Paterson, David A.

Alternative Names: The Honorable David A. Paterson;

Life Dates: May 20, 1955-

Place of Birth: Brooklyn, New York, USA

Residence: New York, NY

Work: New York, NY

Occupations: Political Leader

Biographical Note

Political leader David A. Paterson was born on May 20, 1954, in Brooklyn, New York to Basil Paterson and Portia Paterson. An infection left Paterson legally blind shortly after his birth, so his family moved to Hempstead, New York so that Paterson could attend school without being required to be in special education classes. Paterson went on to earn his B.A. degree in history from Columbia University in New York in 1977. In 1983, Paterson earned his J.D. degree from Hofstra Law School in Hempstead.

After graduating, Paterson worked for the Queens District Attorney's Office. In 1985, Paterson joined the campaign staff for David Dinkins' third campaign for Borough President of Manhattan. That same year, Paterson was elected to the New York State Senate as the youngest state senator in Albany, serving on the State Senate until 2006. In 2002, Paterson was elected as the first African American New York State Senate Minority leader. In 2006, Paterson stepped down from the Senate to run as the first African American lieutenant governor of New York, which he won by a landslide with candidate Eliot Spitzer. In 2008, Spitzer resigned from the position of governor amid a scandal, making Paterson the first African American and legally blind governor of New York in 2008. As governor, Paterson reduced New York's budget deficit by \$40 billion and increased the welfare allowance for needy individuals for the first time in 20 years. Paterson also introduced legislation that would later end discrimination against same-sex couples in New York. After leaving office, Paterson hosted a radio show for New York station WOR from 2011 to 2012. He also taught government as an adjunct professor at New York University. In 2016, Paterson joined Stifel, Nichoulas &

Company as a director of investment.

In 2007, Paterson received the John Jay Award, which is reserved for distinguished alumni, from Columbia University. In 2014, he served as the chairman of the New York Democratic Party, as well as on the board of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. Paterson also chaired the board of the Achilles Track Club.

Paterson has two children; a stepdaughter, Ashley, and a son, Alex.

David A. Paterson was interviewed by The HistoryMakers on February 15, 2017.

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