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ENG 212

*Ernest "Dutch" Morial: For Louisiana By Louisiana*

Ernest "Dutch" Morial was a lawyer and politician who was active during the Civil Rights Movement in New Orleans beginning in the 1960s. His political career was marked by a number of firsts for an African American, including being the first since Reconstruction elected to the Louisiana State Legislature and the first to serve on the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals. He was also the first African American mayor of the city of New Orleans.

Ernest Nathan "Dutch" Morial, the youngest of the six children of Leonie V. and Walter Etienne Morial, was born in New Orleans, Louisiana on October 9, 1929. After his early education, Morial received a BS in Business Administration from Xavier University in 1951. In 1954, Morial became the first African American graduate from Louisiana State University Law School.

Morial began his professional career when he served with the U.S. Army Intelligence Corp during the Korean Conflict, from 1954-1956. During this time Morial married Sybil G. Haydel in 1955, and they would have five children, Julie, Marc, Jacques, Cheri, and Monique. After his military service, Morial returned to his law partnership in New Orleans in 1956 and served as general counsel to the Standard Life Insurance Company from 1960 to 1967. He was appointed assistant U.S. attorney for New Orleans from 1965 to 1967 before beginning a career in electoral politics.

Morial's mentor was A.P. Tureaud, a leading civil rights attorney and key figure in black New Orleans since the 1930s. As president of the New Orleans Chapter of the NAACP from 1962 to 1965, Morial was at the forefront of black protest and the dismantling of Jim Crow. He became an attorney with the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, serving on the national level. Morial participated in the Dryades Street Boycott and fought for the desegregation of buses and streetcars and the integration of Louisiana State University of New Orleans (LSUNO). Morial also filed suits for African Americans to use the Municipal Auditorium and for the wider desegregation of public schools in New Orleans.

In 1967, Morial was elected to the Louisiana State Legislature as Representative for District 80 (Wards 1 and 2), becoming the first African American elected to that body since Reconstruction. Other similar accomplishments of Morial include becoming the first assistant African American U.S. attorney in New Orleans, the first African American to serve as juvenile court judge, and the first African American on the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals.

In 1977, Morial announced his candidacy for Mayor of the city of New Orleans, suing the State Judicial Commission for the right to campaign while remaining a judge. Ultimately, Morial won the general election over Joseph DiRosa by over six thousand votes, becoming the first African American mayor of New Orleans. He gained national attention in his first term as mayor for standing up to police and sanitation workers - leading to a city-wide strike resulting in the cancellation of Mardi Gras in 1979.

In 1982, Morial was reelected Mayor of New Orleans, after defeating Ron Faucheux. Two years later, Morial was elected President of the United States Council of Mayors. Ernest Nathan Morial died suddenly and unexpectedly on December 24, 1989, of a cardiac arrest.

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