

## Gerald A. Neal 1945-

Gerald A. Neal, elected to represent District 33 (in Jefferson County), is the first African American man elected to the Kentucky State Senate. Senator Neal was first elected in 1989 and has since been consecutively re-elected the last 22 years. This represents the second to the longest service of any African American member of the Kentucky General Assembly. He has been a strong voice for senior citizens, youth, the disadvantaged and minorities and a staunch supporter of education, healthcare and penal code reform.

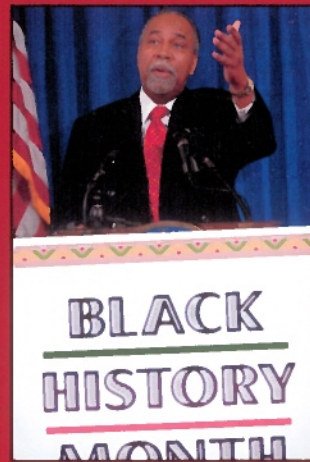
He was born on September 22, 1945. He graduated from Kentucky State University in Frankfort, Ky., in 1967, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History and Political Science. In 1972, he received a Juris Doctor of Law degree from the University of Louisville Brandeis School of Law. He pursued political science graduate studies at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, from 1972 to 1973. Kentucky State University later bestowed upon him an Honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters. The University of Louisville Brandeis School of Law named him a 2006 Distinguished Alumni Law Fellow. He currently serves as a senior fellow at the University of Louisville, where he teaches courses in history, politics and public policy.

Neal has been a practicing attorney with his own law firm, Gerald A. Neal & Associates, LLC., in Louisville, since 1973. He has served as vice president, regional director and parliamentarian of the National Bar Association, and as president of the Kentucky Chapter of the National Bar Association. He is a member of the Kentucky Bar Association and is a Louisville and Kentucky Bar Association Fellow.

As a community leader, he formerly served as assistant director of Public Health and Safety for the City of Louisville, was a hearing officer for the State Workers' Compensation Board and worked as a juvenile probation officer. He served five terms as chair of the Louisville-Jefferson County Metropolitan Sewer District, where he increased the transparency of the agency, opening it to public scrutiny and involvement.

In the Kentucky Senate, he has sponsored legislation requiring school districts to focus on equal educational opportunities. He is the founder of the Kentucky Education Reform African American and All Children's Caucus. He sponsored the law that created the KCHIP Program to provide health care coverage for more of Kentucky's uninsured children and expanded Medicaid coverage for children. He sponsored laws that required the identification of the special needs of the minority elderly population and created the African American Heritage Commission. He sponsored legislation amending the Kentucky Constitution to remove segregation by race, prohibit racial profiling by law enforcement, and prohibit the execution of a person when evidence shows racial bias in prosecution. On May 27, 2010, the Senate adopted Senator Neal's resolution reaffirming the principles of equality preserved in the U. S. Constitution, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Kentucky Civil Rights Act of 1966. The resolution states that the Senate "recognizes the need for equality of all persons in the United States, and in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and the protection of that equality."

Among his honors for distinguished service are the Clarence Mitchell Award from the Kentucky State Conference of NAACP Branches for his support of Civil Rights legislation; the Anderson Laureate Award for his impact on his community, state, and nation; the 1998 Man of the Year from Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity-Psi Boule Chapter; the 2001 Distinguished Citizen Award from the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.; the Georgia Davis Powers Humanitarian Award; the Public Advocate Award for passage of legislation to Abolish Racial Profiling; the Kentucky Public Advocates Award for passage of the Racial Justice Act; and the Nelson Mandela Lifetime Achievement Award from the Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy. He served as a United Nations observer and monitor for the historic April 1994 all race elections in South Africa. He is a 2001 inductee of the Kentucky Civil Rights Hall of Fame.



At far left, Senator Neal debates a bill on the Senate floor. At the immediate left, he leads a U.S. Black History Month Recognition Ceremony in the State Capitol Rotunda, located in Frankfort, Ky.

*Gallery of Great Black Kentuckians*

No. 54

Printed with State Funds

**Kentucky Commission**  
**on Human Rights**