

## **Mark Ridley-Thomas**

### **Biography**

Mark Ridley-Thomas has distinguished himself as an effective leader and advocate for structural change for residents of Los Angeles for nearly three decades. In November 2020, he was elected to serve as Councilmember for the Tenth Council District of the City of Los Angeles. He currently serves as Chair for the Council Homelessness and Poverty Committee.

Mark Ridley-Thomas was first elected to public office in 1991 and previously served on the Los Angeles City Council for nearly a dozen years representing the Eighth District, departing as Council President pro Tempore. He later served two terms in the California State Assembly, where he chaired the Jobs, Economic Development, and Economy Committee and Chaired the Assembly Democratic Caucus.

He went on to represent the 26th District in the California State Senate, where he chaired the Senate's Committee on Business, Professions and Economic Development. While in the Senate, he served as Chair of the California Legislative Black Caucus in 2008 and led the Caucus in unprecedented levels of cooperation and collaboration with counterparts in the Latino and Asian-Pacific Islander Legislative Caucuses.

In 2008, he was elected to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and served as Supervisor for the Second District for a total of three terms, after being reelected in 2012 and 2016. At the Board of Supervisors, Mark Ridley-Thomas notably authored and led LA County's unprecedented effort to end homelessness through Measure H. He also championed the opening of the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital after the King-Drew Medical Center shut down in 2007. The hospital now stands as the centerpiece of a transformed and state-of-the-art medical campus, within a community that has experienced over a billion dollars in investment in medical facilities, affordable housing, infrastructure and community-based improvements. Additionally, he served as on the Board of Directors of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, overseeing the construction of the Crenshaw/LAX Line, as well as the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum Commission and LA Care, the nation's largest publicly operated health plan.

He is widely regarded as the foremost advocate of neighborhood participation in government decision-making by virtue of his founding of the Empowerment Congress, a 29-year initiative to foster neighborhood-based civic engagement. His political career was preceded by a decade of service as the Executive Director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Greater Los Angeles (1981-1991).

The Councilmember graduated from Manual Arts High School (Class of 1972) and then earned bachelor's and master's degrees, along with secondary and adult education credentials, from Immaculate Heart College. He went on to receive his Ph.D. in Social Ethics from the University of Southern California focusing on social criticism and social change.

Mark Ridley-Thomas is married to Avis Ridley-Thomas, a professional mediator, Co-Founder and Director of the Institute for Non-Violence in Los Angeles. They are the proud parents of adult twin sons, Sebastian and Sinclair, and their daughter-in-law Shaunicie, plus two wonderful grandchildren, Duke Flynn (4) and Maya Yvette (1).