Hon. MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Second District

Since he was overwhelmingly elected in November 2008 and reelected in June 2012 to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Mark Ridley-Thomas has distinguished himself as an aggressive advocate for the Second District's nearly 2 million residents.

He has promoted the district's interests on a variety of fronts, including transportation, job creation, retention and local hiring. In the area of health policy, Supervisor Ridley-Thomas has overseen the construction of a new Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital, as well as a network of cutting edge healthcare facilities throughout the district; he has facilitated the use of technology and encouraged an integrated approach to wellness that includes mental health care and a prominent role for school-based clinics. His advocacy has helped secure an equitable share of funding for public-private partnership health clinics in underserved areas.

Prior to his election to the Board, Supervisor Ridley-Thomas served the 26th District in the California State Senate where he chaired the Senate's Committee on Business, Professions and Economic Development. 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.

Mark Ridley-Thomas was first elected to public office in 1991 and served with distinction on the Los Angeles City Council for nearly a dozen years and departed as Council President pro Tempore. He later served two terms in the California State Assembly, where he chaired the Assembly Democratic Caucus. His legislative work addressed a broad range of issues with implications for economic and workforce development, health care, public safety, education, budget accountability, consumer protection and civic participation.

He is widely regarded as the foremost advocate of neighborhood participation in government decision-making. By virtue of his founding of the Empowerment Congress, arguably the region's most successful twenty year experiment in neighborhood-based civic engagement, he is considered the founder of the Neighborhood Council movement.

Ridley-Thomas' political career was preceded by a decade of service as executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Greater Los Angeles, which followed a brief but successful five-year stint as a high school teacher.

The chairman is a graduate of Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles and earned a baccalaureate degree in Social Relations (minor in Government) and a master's degree in Religious Studies (concentration in Christian ethics) from Immaculate Heart College. Supervisor Ridley-Thomas went on to receive his Ph.D. in Social Ethics from the University of Southern California focusing on Social Criticism and Social Change.

He is married to Avis Ridley-Thomas, Co-Founder and Director of the Center for Non-Violence in Los Angeles. They are the proud parents of Morehouse College graduates Sinclair and Sebastian, a California State Assembly Member.