

Shirley chisholm's evolution, from the early years to a seat in us congress

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A Brief Biography of Shirley Chisholm(1924-2005)

Shirley St. Hill was born in New York City on November 30, 1924 she was the oldest of four daughters. Her parents were Charles and Ruby St. Hill. In 1927 at age 3 Shirley was sent to live on her grandmothers farm in Barbados. She attended British grammar school and picked up the Caribbean accent that marked her speech. Shirley moved back to New York in 1934 at the age of 11 and went on to graduate in 1946 from Brooklyn College with honors later earning a masters degree from Columbia University. During this time it was difficult for black college graduates to find jobs. After being rejected by many companies, she obtained a job at the Mt. Calvary childcare center in Harlem. In 1949 she married Conrad Chisholm, Shirley and her husband participated in local politics. In 1946 she ran for an assembly seat. She won and served in the New York general assembly from 1964 to 1968.

In 1968 after finishing her term in the legislature, Shirley Chisholm campaigned to represent New York's Twelfth Congressional District. Her campaign slogan was "Fighting Shirley Chisholm" Un bought and Un bossed. She won then election and became the first African American woman elected to congress. During her first term in congress, Chisholm hired an all-female staff and spoke out for civil rights, womens rights, the poor and against the Vietnam War. In 1970 she was elected to a second term. On January 25, 1972, Chisholm announced her candidacy for president. She stood before the cameras and in the beginning of her speech she said, "I stand before you today as a candidate for the Democratic nomination for the Presidency of the United States. I am not the candidate of black America,

although I am black and proud. I am not the candidate of the womens of this country, although I am a woman, and I am equally proud of that. I am not the candidate of any political bosses or special interest. I am the candidate of the people.

Though Shirley did not win a single primary during the 1972 presidential election, she captured over 150 votes on the first ballot and later said her campaign had been a necessary catalyst for change. Shirley went on to serve for ten more years in the House and retired in 1982 after seven terms in congress. Shirley kept active in politics following her retirement by co-founding the National Political Congress of Black Women and serving as its founding in 1984 until 1992. Shirley also lectured, taught at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts and wrote two books, including her autobiography "Un bought and Un bossed", which was the campaign slogan she used in her first race for congress. Shirley moved to Florida in 1991 and died at the age of 80 on January 1, 2005 at her home in Ormond Beach. Asked how she hoped to be remembered, Shirley once commented, "I'd like them to say Shirley Chisholm had guts. That's how I'd like to be remembered."