



Image. State Representative Jefferson Reaves Sr. (Source: Florida Memory).

Image. State Representative Jefferson Reaves being sworn into the Florida Legislature. (Source: Florida Memory).

State Representative Jefferson Reaves Sr.

State Representative Jefferson Reaves Sr. was a long-time Brownsville resident, career educator, community leader, and a public servant. Reaves served as the founding president of the Brownsville Civic and Neighborhood Association in 1980. Soon after, he was elected as a Florida State Representative in 1982 for District 106, which encompassed Allapattah, Wynwood and Overtown. He served in the legislature until he stepped down for health reasons in May 1990. His son Darryl Reaves was elected to fill his father's position in November 1990.

During his time in the state legislature, Jefferson Reaves, Sr., put his energy into uplifting the young people of his district, most of whom were minorities, marginalized, and economically deprived. He was particularly concerned with improving health care for the Black community and improving the public school system for black males in Miami-Dade County. He served as vice chairman of the State Minority Policy Committee from 1984 to 1986. Some of his bills in the legislature that passed included an improved ranking system for construction projects that would allow minority firms to compete for government contracts, funding for Brownsville Park (later renamed Jefferson Reaves, Sr. Park in his honor), funding for the James E. Scott Community Association After-School Program for at-risk youth, and funding for the Jefferson Reaves, Sr. Health Center in Overtown. The Jefferson Reaves, Sr. Health Center is a focal point for healthcare services in Overtown and surrounding communities. He was committed to providing health services and to the dignity, social well-being, and health of all patients served. The health center is the home of the University of Miami-run Family Medicine Residency Training Program.

Jefferson Reaves, Jr, was born in Webster, a small town in Central Florida, in 1926 to the late Reverend Coleman and Estella Reaves. He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in education from Florida A&M in Tallahassee. In 1957, Jefferson Reaves, Sr., moved to Miami, where he began a long career as an educator and administrator in the Miami-Dade Public School system. He retired in 1986 as a fourth-grade math teacher at Dunbar Elementary School. He passed away in February 1991 and is remembered as a role model to the youth of Brownsville, putting "his energy into developing the raw human capital in young people that he saw as representing the great richness of the district"^{1 2}

¹ Quote by Arthur Teele, quoted in "Activist Jefferson Reaves; former state representative" The Miami Herald (Miami, Florida), Mon, Feb 11, 1991, Page 21 <https://www.newspapers.com/image/635630290/>

² The information in this biography is taken from the Martin, Lydia and Richard Wallace, "Activist Jefferson Reaves; former state representative" The Miami Herald (Miami, Florida), Mon, Feb 11, 1991, Page 21 <https://www.newspapers.com/image/635630290/>