

# Life & Work with Fredrick Sykes



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Today we'd like to introduce you to Fredrick Sykes.

**Hi Fredrick, we're thrilled to have a chance to learn your story today. So, before we get into specifics, maybe you can briefly walk us through how you got to where you are today?**

Born to Black/African American Sharecroppers (Slaves) in Pineville, Louisiana, U.S.A. in 1951 to McLary and Bertha. Sykes. At that time, they had two sons. In 1952, my father was drafted into the U.S. Army to fight in the Korean War. Enroute to Korea he saw how Blacks seem to have a better life in California. After surviving Korea and when honorably discharged from the Army, he moved his family to California where they produced five more children. Five boys and two girls (twins).

We lived in a World War II Housing Project in Watts called Palm Lane. After the Watts Riots of 1965 some adjustments were made in South Central Los Angeles. In 1966, I was 16 years old when Palm Lane was torn down and my family moved to the city of Compton, and I attended Compton High School.

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I have worked since I was 12 years old as Newspaper Delivery Boy, fruit picker, dishwasher and general laborer. In High School, I attended full-time and worked part-time jobs and sometimes, I worked full-time eight hours after school.

Graduated from Compton High School in June 1969. Eventually, I worked part-time as a park director for the City of Compton in the summer of 1969. In the Fall of 1969, I started attending Compton College and obtained a part-time job working at the Sears Vernon Outlet Store.

In 1971, I acquired my Associate of Arts Degree and transferred to California State College at Los Angeles. Also, in 1971 I started working for the City of Compton as a Community Service Officer. In March 1973, I joined the L.A. County Sheriff's Department where I was a Professional Police Officer, a Deputy Sheriff until March 2006 when I retired after 33 years of service.

In 2011, I was the first Black American to be elected to the City of West Covina – City Council and in 2015, I was the Mayor of the City.

I lost my reelection challenge and subsequently, I was appointed to the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations by L.A. County Board of Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, District 1. I am also a member of the Mount San Antonio College Citizens Oversight Committee.

### **Would you say it's been a smooth road, and if not what are some of the biggest challenges you've faced along the way?**

I had to learn how not to let racism destroy my self-esteem. I lost my mother in 2006 and I have lost more than a few elections and currently, I am working again to try to get elected to the West Covina City Council on Tuesday, November 08, 2022.

### **Appreciate you sharing that. What else should we know about what you do?**

My career as a Deputy Sheriff, the most important factor for me is that a Professional Police Officer must at all times be a person of trust, honesty and integrity. And I discovered that elected and appointed Government Officials are not good for the people when they are without trust, honesty and integrity.

Most proud of growing up in Compton and me and all of my siblings have been valuable contributing members of our communities. I was extremely proud to represent my neighbors as a City Councilmember and Mayor in the City of West Covina and to have the trust of B.O.S. Hilda Solis.

### **Can you talk to us about how you think about risk?**

Running for City Council for the average resident is very costly in time and money; however, because for my whole life, I have been a Public Servant, Police Officer and I am passionate and dedicated to my community, I do not mind taking the risk and being deeply involved. I enjoy helping others and working to improve my community.

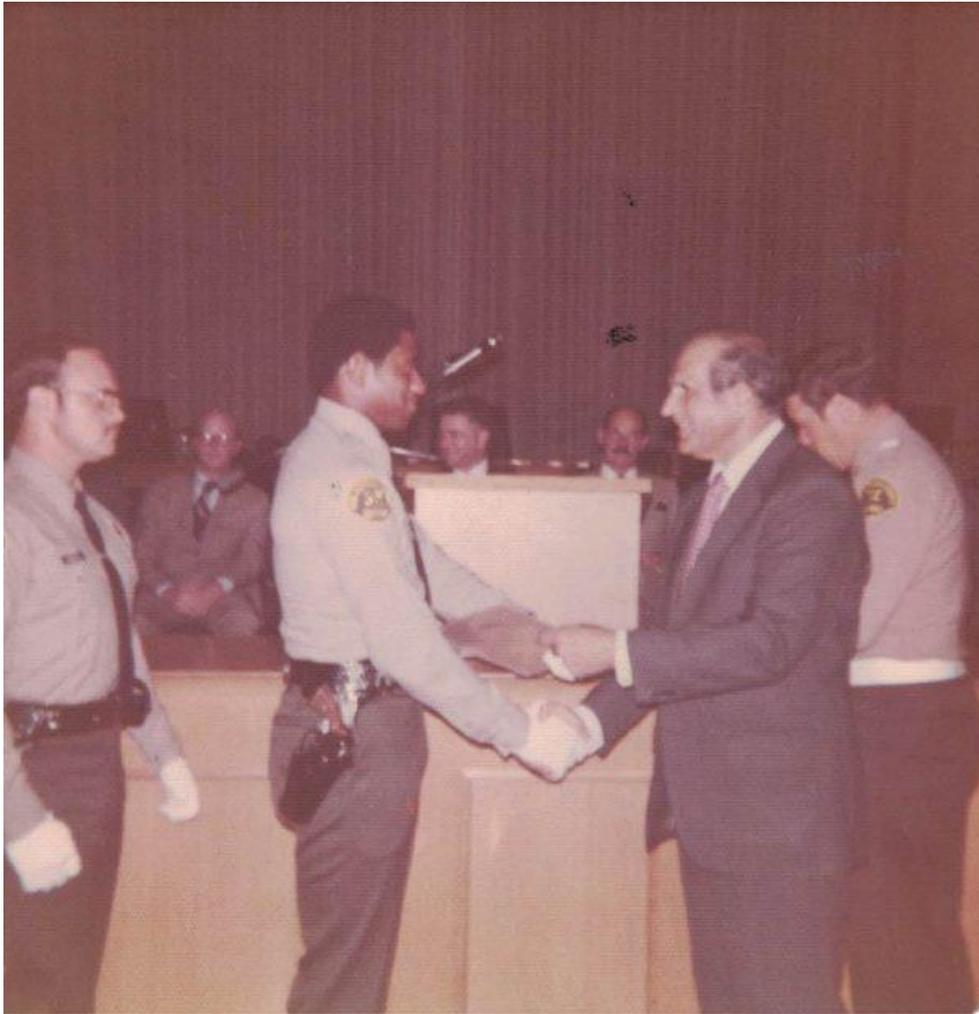
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