

# Biographical Description for The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Wayne Watson

PERSON

**Watson, Wayne, 1945-**

**Alternative Names:** Wayne Watson;

**Life Dates:** September 1, 1945-

**Place of Birth:** Chicago, Illinois, USA

**Residence:** Chicago, IL

**Occupations:** Chancellor

## Biographical Note

Chancellor of the largest community college system in the country, Wayne D. Watson, was born September 1, 1945, in Chicago, Illinois. Watson's parents sacrificed financially to send him to private Catholic schools, and at Mt. Carmel High School, Watson was a standout on the wrestling team, though an average student. After graduation in 1964, Watson was invited to try out for the U.S. Olympic Wrestling Team. At Joliet Junior College, Watson won the junior college wrestling championship and earned his A.A. degree. At Northwestern University, Watson received three degrees: his B.A. degree in education in 1968; his M.A. degree in education and sociology in 1970; and his Ph. D in education administration in 1972.

After earning his doctorate, Watson served as associate professor of education at Shaw University from 1972 to 1975. Flight lessons and pilot training led to two years as general manager of Wheeler Airlines, the first African American company offering regularly scheduled flights. From 1977 to 1978, Watson served as headmaster of Boggs Academy; In 1978, he returned to Chicago, accepting a position at Malcolm X College. While at Malcolm X, Watson was appointed vice president of instructional services, where he served from 1980 to 1983. Leaving Malcolm X, Watson was named vice president of the City Colleges of Chicago, where he remained until 1986. Watson went on to become president of both Harold Washington College and Kennedy-King College in the 1990s

As chancellor of the City Colleges of Chicago, Watson oversaw seven community colleges in a system that served 170,000 students; over 9,500 employees; and had an annual operating budget of \$260 million. Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley appointed Watson to the seven-member Bronzeville Committee and the Chicago Fire Department Committee for Promotion and Rank. Watson also served as a member of the Fantus

Health Center Advisory Board, and was co-chairman of the Capital Development Board for Chicago Public Schools. Watson was honored as a distinguished alumnus by Northwestern University.

## Related Entries

**Mount Carmel High School** [STUDENTOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Wheeler Airlines** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**General Manager**

**Harold Washington College** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**President**

**Kennedy-King College** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**President**

**City Colleges of Chicago** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Chancellor**

**Shaw University** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 2001 to 2005]

**Associate Professor**

**Boggs Academy** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 199206 to 199309]

**Headmaster**

**Malcolm X College** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1978 to ?]

**Malcolm X College** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from ? to ?]

**Vice President of Instructional Services**

**City Colleges of Chicago** [EMPLOYEEOF]  
[from 1983 to 1986]

**Vice President**

