

**BRENDA J. COUNCIL
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Brenda J. Council is a native of Omaha, Nebraska. Upon graduation from Omaha Central High School (1971), Ms. Council enrolled at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where she earned a Bachelors of Science Degree, With Distinction, in Secondary Education in 1974. Ms. Council received her Juris Doctor Degree from Creighton University in 1977. Ms. Council was awarded a Doctor of Humane Letters by the College of Saint Mary's in 2021.

Ms. Council began her legal career in 1977 as a Field Attorney with the National Labor Relations Board in Kansas City, Kansas. She returned to Omaha in 1980 to accept a position in the Legal Department of Union Pacific Railroad. During her 18 year tenure with Union Pacific Railroad, Ms. Council served as Senior Contracts Counsel, Senior Real Estate Counsel and Senior Labor Counsel.

Ms. Council left Union Pacific Railroad in 1998 to join the Kutak Rock law firm. She was a partner at Kutak Rock when she left in 2002 to join the law firm of Polk, Waldman, Wickman & Council. Ms. Council was associated with the Whitner Law Firm, P.C., LLO, in an "Of Counsel" capacity, from 2004 until 2009.

Ms. Council was admitted to practice in the federal, district, county and juvenile courts in the State of Nebraska. She was also a member of the bar of the United States District Court for the Districts of Colorado and Wisconsin, the United States Court of Appeals for the 5th, 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th Circuits, and the United States Supreme Court. Ms. Council was appointed as a judge on the Nebraska Commission of Industrial Relations in 2001 and served until 2005. She taught the Labor Law course one semester at Creighton Law School.

In addition to her legal career, Ms. Council established herself in the political and civic arenas. She was elected to represent the 2nd District on the Omaha Board of Education in 1982 and served for 11 years. Ms. Council was the first African American elected President of the School Board, serving in that capacity for four (4) terms. Ms. Council was also elected and served as President of the National Caucus of Black School Board Members.

Ms. Council was the first African American woman to serve on the Omaha City Council, having been elected in 1993. She served on various City Council committees and was elected to represent the City Council on the Douglas County Land Reutilization Commission.

Ms. Council unsuccessfully campaigned for mayor of the City of Omaha in 1994. Undaunted, Ms. Council ran for mayor again in 1997, losing by less than 800 votes.

On the day that history was made nationally with the election of Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States America, Ms. Council was a part of making history in the State of Nebraska by being one of the first African American women ever elected to serve in the Unicameral. As a State Senator, Ms. Council represented the 11th Legislative District and was a member of the Agriculture, Business and Labor, Judiciary and Education Committees.

Ms. Council's community and civic involvement includes current membership on the board of directors of the Omaha Economic Development Corporation, the North Omaha Community Care Council, and the Carver Grange. Ms. Council's previous board service included United Way of the Midlands, Urban League of Nebraska, New Community Development Corporation, Nebraska Community Foundation, Omaha Healthy Kids Alliance (OHKA), the Charles Drew Health Center Foundation, Boys and Girls Club of Omaha, and the Susan A. Buffett (now Sherwood) Foundation.

Ms. Council served for over 6 years as the facilitator of the Omaha Superfund Community Advisory Group (CAG), which provided input to the EPA on the remediation action and advocated for the creation of OHKA. Omaha is the largest residential Superfund site in the nation.

Ms. Council retired in 2019 as the Adolescent Health Manager for the Women's Fund of Omaha, where she led a community-wide effort to prevent STDs and teen pregnancy.

Ms. Council has been the recipient of numerous awards and honors including Outstanding Young Omahan and Nebraskan, the Nebraska State Bar Association's Professionalism Award, Elizabeth Pittman Award presented by the Creighton University Law School and the Black American Law Students Association, the Urban League of Nebraska National Prominence Award, the University of Nebraska Alumni Association Award, the A+ Award presented by the Omaha Public Schools, the African American Leadership Award presented by the Durham Museum, the Public Citizen of the Year Award presented by Nebraska Assoc. of Social Workers, the Spirit of Advocacy Award presented by NOCCC, and the Champion of Change Award presented by NOAH. also has the distinction of having been featured in three editions of Ebony magazine (including One of the 50 Young Leaders of the Future and Husbands of Powerful Women).

Ms. Council and her husband of 36 years, Otha, have an adult son and five grandchildren.

