

## Michael L. Thurmond

### BRIEF BIO

MICHAEL L. THURMOND is the chief executive officer of DeKalb County, Georgia. He is the author of *James Oglethorpe, Father of Georgia, Freedom: Georgia's Antislavery Heritage, 1733–1865*, and *A Story Untold: Black Men and Women in Athens History*. Thurmond has previously served in the Georgia legislature, as director of Georgia's Division of Family and Children Services, Georgia labor commissioner, and as superintendent of DeKalb schools. In 1997, Thurmond became a distinguished lecturer at the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government. He lives in Stone Mountain, Georgia.

### EXPANDED BIO

MICHAEL L. THURMOND is the chief executive officer of DeKalb County, Georgia. He is also an attorney, author, and motivational speaker.

Thurmond's book *Freedom: Georgia's Antislavery Heritage, 1733-1865*, was awarded the prestigious Georgia Historical Society's Lilla Hawes Award. In 2004, the Georgia Center for the Book listed *Freedom* as "One of the Twenty-Five Books All Georgians Should Read." The third edition of his first book, *A Story Untold: Black Men & Women in Athens (GA) History*, was published in 2019. The following year, the Georgia Historical Records Advisory Council awarded Thurmond a Lifetime Achievement Award for his contributions to the research and preservation of African American Georgia history.

CEO Thurmond, a sharecropper's son, holds a Bachelor of Arts in philosophy and religion from Paine College and a Juris Doctor from the University of South Carolina's School of Law. Thurmond also completed the Political Executives program at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

He earned the reputation of being a "turnaround expert" after transforming the culture and operations of the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services, the Georgia Department of Labor, and the DeKalb County School District.

In 1986, Thurmond became the first African American elected to the Georgia General Assembly from Athens/Clarke County since Reconstruction. In 1998, he was elected Georgia Labor Commissioner, becoming one of the first African Americans to be elected to statewide office in Georgia.

He is married to Zola Fletcher Thurmond, and they have one daughter, Mikaya.