

C. Delores Tucker

Cynthia Delores Tucker (née **Nottage**; October 4, 1927 – October 12, 2005) was an American politician and civil rights activist perhaps best known for her participation in the Civil Rights Movement and her stance against gangsta rap music beginning in the early 1990s.^[1]

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Early life and education



Tucker's house on Lincoln Drive in Philadelphia

Born in Philadelphia to a minister Whitfield Nottage from the Bahamas and a "Christian feminist mother" Captilda Gardiner Nottage from the Bahamas on October 4, 1927, Tucker was the tenth of thirteen children.^[1] Tucker attended Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business. Tucker was later the recipient of two honorary doctoral degrees from

Morris College in Sumter, South Carolina and California State University Northridge in California, and for this reason, she is sometimes referred to as "Dr. C. Delores Tucker".

Career

Civil activities

C. Delores Tucker



Secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

In office

January 20, 1971 – September 21, 1977

Governor Milton Shapp

Preceded by Joseph Kelley

Succeeded by Barton Fields

Personal details

Born Cynthia Delores Nottage
October 4, 1927
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States

Died October 12, 2005 (aged 78)^[1]
Norristown, Pennsylvania, United States

Political party Democratic

Spouse(s) William Tucker (m. 1951–2005)^[1]

Alma mater Temple University (attended)^[1]

Tucker had a long history in the Civil Rights Movement. Early on, her civil activities included participating in the 1965 march in Selma, Alabama alongside the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and raising funds for the NAACP.^[2] In 1990, Tucker, along with 15 other African American women and men, formed the African-American Women for Reproductive Freedom.^[3] She was the

convening founder and national chair of the National Congress of Black Women, Inc. (NCBW), having succeeded the Hon. Shirley Chisholm in 1992. Tucker also was responsible for the Governor's appointment of more women judges and more women and African Americans to boards and commissions than ever before. She also led the effort to make Pennsylvania one of the first states to pass the Equal Rights Amendment. As Chief of Elections of Pennsylvania, she was a leader in instituting a voter registration by mail and reducing the voting age from 21 to 18 years of age.

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| | The Wharton School |
| Profession | Politician · civil rights activist |

Political

In 1971, Tucker became the first black female Secretary of State when Pennsylvania Governor Milton Shapp appointed her Secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. During her tenure, she instituted the first Commission on the Status of Women.^[4] Shapp fired Tucker in September 1977 for allegedly using state employees to write speeches for which she received honorariums.^[5] Two years later, one of Tucker's successors as Secretary of the Commonwealth, Dr. Ethel D. Allen, would also be fired for using public employees to write speeches.^[6] She was founder and president of the Bethune-DuBois Institute, Inc., which she established in 1991 to promote the cultural development of African American youth through scholarships and educational programs.^[4] Tucker also launched, and served as publisher of the publication, *Vital Issues: The Journal of African American Speeches*.

Media

In 1988 she made an extended appearance on a British television discussion programme, *After Dark*.^[7]

Hip-Hop/Rap music

Tucker dedicated much of the last few years of her life to condemning sexually explicit lyrics in rap and hip-hop tracks, citing a concern that the lyrics were misogynistic and threatened the moral foundation of the African American community.^{[8][9]}

Called "narrow-minded" by some rappers who often mentioned her in their lyrics, Tucker picketed stores that sold rap music and bought stock in Sony, Time Warner, and other companies in order to protest hip-hop at their shareholders' meetings.^[8] She also fought against the NAACP's decision to nominate late rapper Tupac Shakur for one of its Image Awards^[8] and filed a \$10 million lawsuit against his estate for comments that the rapper made in his song "How Do U Want It?"^[11] on the album *All Eyez on Me*, in which Shakur rapped "C. Delores Tucker you's a motherfucker / Instead of trying to help a nigga you destroy a brother". In her lawsuit, Tucker claimed that comments in this song, and on the track "Wonda Why They Call U Bitch" from the same album, inflicted emotional distress, were slanderous and invaded her privacy.^[10] This case was eventually dismissed.^[11]

Other rappers have taken similar stances. In his song "Church for Thugs", The Game raps "*I've got more hatred in my soul than Pac had for De'ores Tucker.*" Jay-Z chimes in as well, with the lines "*I don't care if you're C. Dolores Tucker or you're Bill O'Reilly, you only riling me up,*" from The Black Album's "Threat." Lil' Kim also referenced her in a leftover track, entitled "Rockin' It", from her second studio album. Kim raps "*C. Delores T., Screw her, I never knew her*", after Tucker dubbed her music as "gangsta porno rap" and "filth".^{[12][13]} Much of KRS-One and Channel Live's "Free Mumia" is a direct criticism of what the MCs see as Tucker's misplaced energy. Lil Wayne also referenced her a couple times, once on his leftover song "Million Dollar Baby" rapping "Can't be banned I'm sorry Miss Delores" and more recently on his Carter IV album song "Megaman" rapping

"The heater ima Tucker, Tucker, like Delores." Tucker later went on to serve on the Advisory Board of the Parents Television Council until her death in 2005.^[14] Eminem referenced her in the song "Rap Game" by D12 rapping "Tell that C. Delores Tucker slut to suck a dick"^[15].

Accolades

Selected as one of *25 of the World's Most Intriguing People* by People magazine, Tucker was also selected as a People Magazine 1996 Yearbook Honoree, and was featured in the inaugural issue of John F. Kennedy, Jr.'s George magazine for her crusade against gangsta rap. In addition, she has been acknowledged for her deep concern for children by First Lady Hillary Clinton in the book It Takes A Village. The National Women's Political Caucus and Redbook also named her as the woman best qualified to be Ambassador to the United Nations. For five consecutive years, from 1972 through 1977, she was listed as among Ebony magazine's *100 Most Influential Black Americans*. During that period, she was listed as Ladies Home Journal Nominee for Woman of the Year in both 1975 and 1976. She was recognized by Ebony as one of the '100 Most Influential Black Organization Leaders' in the country in 2001 and 2002. Tucker was also a prominent member of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority.^[4] On April 25, 2006, a state historical marker honoring Tucker was unveiled by Bill Tucker and Governor Ed Rendell in a ceremony at the State Museum of Pennsylvania, in Harrisburg. In addition, it was announced that the North Building, which is adjacent to the State Capitol Building, was to be renamed the Secretary C. Delores Tucker Building. The state marker, which was commissioned by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, was installed outside the entrance to the building. The marker reads:

C. Delores Tucker

1927—2005

Civil rights leader and activist for women, she was the first African American Secretary of State in the nation. Championed the PA Equal Rights Amendment and policies on affirmative action, voter registration by mail, and lowering the voting age to 18. Spearheaded the creation of the Commission on the Status of Women & led a successful crusade critical of the music industry and lyrics demeaning to women, African Americans, and children.^[16]

Personal life and death

In 1951, Tucker married William "Bill" Tucker,^[1] a successful Philadelphia real estate agent. Tucker herself had worked in real estate and insurance sales early in her career. Tucker had no children. She died on Wednesday, October 12, 2005, at Suburban Woods Health Center in Norristown, Pennsylvania, at the age of 78.^[8]

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External links

- Official Website of the Philadelphia Congress of the National Congress of Black Women (<https://web.archive.org/web/20080107185112/http://www.philacongressncbw.org/home.htm>)
- Delores Tuckers's oral history video excerpts (<http://www.visionaryproject.org/tuckercdelores>) at The National Visionary Leadership Project
- Appearances (<https://www.c-span.org/person/?ctucker>) on C-SPAN

| Political offices | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Preceded by Joseph Kelley | Secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania 1971–1977 | Succeeded by Barton Fields |

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