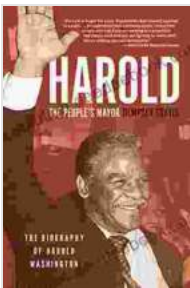


Harold Washington: The People's Mayor of Chicago

Harold Washington was a trailblazing politician who served as the 51st mayor of Chicago from 1983 until his untimely death in 1987. He was the first African-American mayor of the city, and his election marked a watershed moment in Chicago's history.

Washington was a lifelong Chicagoan, born on April 15, 1922, in the city's South Side. He attended DuSable High School and Roosevelt University, and served in the U.S. Army during World War II. After the war, he returned to Chicago and studied law at DePaul University. He began his political career in the early 1960s, serving as a state representative and then a state senator.



Harold, the People's Mayor: The Biography of Harold Washington by Scott Walker

★★★★☆ 4.9 out of 5

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In 1983, Washington ran for mayor of Chicago against incumbent Mayor Jane Byrne. The campaign was bitterly contested, and Washington faced accusations of racism and sexism. Despite the challenges, Washington prevailed, becoming the first African-American mayor of the city. His election was a major victory for the city's black community, and it signaled a new era in Chicago politics.

As mayor, Washington implemented a number of progressive policies, including a freeze on property taxes, increased funding for public education, and a commitment to economic development. He also created a new department of human services and expanded the city's affirmative action program.

Washington's policies were not always popular, and he faced opposition from both the city's white political establishment and some members of the black community. However, he remained a popular figure, and he was re-elected in 1987.

Tragically, Washington died of a heart attack on November 25, 1987, just one year into his second term. His death sent shockwaves through the city, and he was mourned by people of all races and backgrounds.

Washington's legacy as mayor is complex and contested, but there is no doubt that he was a transformative figure in Chicago's history.

Early Life and Career

Harold Washington was born on April 15, 1922, in the Bronzeville neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago. His parents, Roy and Bertha Washington, were sharecroppers who had migrated from Mississippi to Chicago in search of a better life. Harold was the youngest of five children.

Washington attended DuSable High School, where he excelled in academics and athletics. He was also a talented musician, and he played the trumpet in the school band.

After graduating from high school, Washington attended Roosevelt University, where he studied political science. He was active in student government and was elected president of the student body.

In 1943, Washington was drafted into the U.S. Army. He served in the Pacific Theater during World War II, and he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for his bravery in combat.

After the war, Washington returned to Chicago and studied law at DePaul University. He graduated from law school in 1952, and he began his legal career as a civil rights attorney.

In 1960, Washington was elected to the Illinois House of Representatives. He served in the House for four terms, and he was a vocal advocate for civil rights and social justice.

In 1966, Washington was elected to the Illinois State Senate. He served in the Senate for four terms, and he was a key figure in the passage of the state's first open housing law.

Mayoral Campaign and Election

In 1982, Washington announced his candidacy for mayor of Chicago. He faced a crowded field of candidates, including incumbent Mayor Jane Byrne.

The campaign was bitterly contested, and Washington faced accusations of racism and sexism. Despite the challenges, Washington prevailed, becoming the first African-American mayor of the city.

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Mayoralty

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Death and Legacy

Tragically, Washington died of a heart attack on November 25, 1987, just one year into his second term.

His death sent shockwaves through the city, and he was mourned by people of all races and backgrounds.

Washington's legacy as mayor is complex and contested, but there is no doubt that he was a transformative figure in Chicago's history.

He was a pioneer for civil rights and social justice, and he helped to make Chicago a more inclusive and equitable city.

Impact on Chicago

Harold Washington's impact on Chicago was profound. He was the first African-American mayor of the city, and his election marked a watershed moment in Chicago's history.

Washington implemented a number of progressive policies that had a lasting impact on the city.

His freeze on property taxes helped to stabilize the city's finances and protect homeowners from rising costs.

His increased funding for public education helped to improve the quality of education in the city's public schools.

His commitment to economic development led to the creation of new jobs and businesses in the city.

Washington also created a new department of human services to provide assistance to the city's most vulnerable residents.

And he expanded the city's affirmative action program to ensure that all Chicagoans had a fair chance to succeed.

Washington's policies were not always popular, but they helped to make Chicago a more inclusive and equitable city.

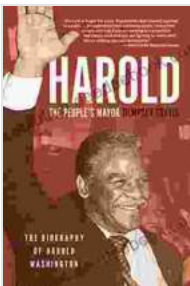
He was a pioneer for civil rights and social justice, and his legacy continues to inspire people today.

Harold Washington was a trailblazing politician who made a significant impact on the city of Chicago.

He was the first African-American mayor of the city, and his election marked a watershed moment in Chicago's history.

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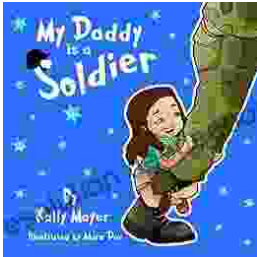
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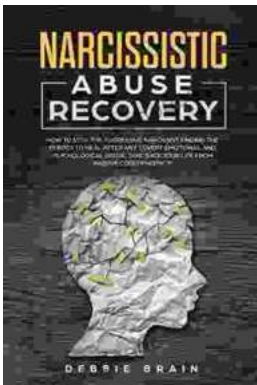
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