

Representative Paula Hicks Hudson, Assistant Minority Whip

44th House District



As the first black female mayor of Toledo, State Rep. Paula Hicks Hudson has always exhibited a commitment to empowering and helping people improve their quality of life. She currently represents Ohio's 44th House District, which includes central Toledo.

Raised in the city of Hamilton, Ohio, Rep. Hudson often cites education as a pathway to success. She graduated from Spelman College, a historically black high education institution for women, with her Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Journalism. Rep. Hudson then went on to graduate with her Master's Degree in Communications Development from Colorado State University.

Following graduation, Rep. Hudson and her family returned to Wilberforce, Ohio, where she taught readiness skills to underprepared students in the Upward Bound Program at Central State University. It was through this experience that Paula saw the challenges that young people faced with the legal system. As a result, Rep. Hudson returned to law school with a focus on juvenile justice issues.

After graduating with her Juris Doctorate from the University of Iowa, Rep. Hudson moved with her family to Toledo in 1982. As a Reginald Heber Smith Fellow, she began her career at Toledo Legal Aid Society representing senior citizens and working with several community groups.

Rep. Hudson's purpose has centered on improving the quality of her community through her hard work in the public and private sector. During her 35-year professional career, she has worked as assistant Lucas County prosecutor, assistant public defender and assistant state attorney general. From 1998-2002, she served as the legislative director of the Toledo City Council. Following that, she served as the director and deputy director of the Lucas County Board of Elections and chief legal counsel to the Ohio Office of Budget and Management under Governor Ted Strickland.

From negotiating labor contracts for Ohio Shared Services Center and teaching domestic relations law, to conducting voter education activities for Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur, Rep. Hudson has advocated for a diverse range of issues in a holistic and sensible way.



Of particular note are her numerous programs and efforts geared toward youth well-being and educational issues. As a Court Appointed Child Advocate-Guardian ad Litem, Rep. Hudson is trained in mediation and advocates for neglected and underrepresented youth. As a result of her efforts, she has been honored by the Urban Minority Alcohol and Drug Outreach Program. She also continues her partnership with the Coalition and Quality Education and Covenant Youth Development Corporation to increase opportunities for young people. As a professor of juvenile justice, Rep. Hudson has informed upcoming professionals of the importance of intervention and prevention programs and actions for development of productive citizenship for our future society.

In 2011, while working for her own private law practice and teaching criminal justice at the University of Toledo's College of Law, Paula was selected by the Lucas County Democratic Party to fill the vacancy on the Toledo City Council District 4 seat.

From 2011 to 2015, Rep. Hudson served on Toledo City Council, serving as President of Council from 2013 until she became Mayor of Toledo.

Rep. Hudson's commitment to community empowerment and revitalization has also led her to serve on the following boards and organizations: the NAACP, the YWCA, the Frederick Douglass Community Center, Toledo Youth Hostel, the African American Law Enforcement Agents, Lucas County Land Reutilization Corporation, and the state and national Federations of Business and Professional Women, Inc. She is also the past president of the Thurgood Marshall Law Association and the Toledo Women's Bar Association.

Outside of her dedicated, successful professional career she enjoys many rich connections and activities with family and friends. She has been married to Freeman W. Hudson since 1973 and is the proud mother of two adult daughters, Patricia Hope and Leah Free Star, and grandmother of seven grandchildren. An accomplished musician, Hudson serves as the minister of music at Redeemer Lutheran Church.