



A Biographical Sketch – by Rev. Dr. Finley C. Campbell

I was born in 1934 in Anderson, South Carolina, the first born of Mrs. Pauline J. Campbell and the third born of Rev. Stephen C. “Dynamo” Campbell. In Anderson I attended Reed Street grammar school and was a member of St. Paul Baptist Church Sunday School, my father’s church. In 1942 we moved to Detroit, Michigan as a part of the Second Great Negro/black migration. My father had been called by the officers of the Russell Street Baptist Church, many of whom were former friends and members of my father’s Baptist network, and many of them were industrial proletarians, working in the great war industries of Detroit.

We lived in two integrated neighborhoods. We were the third black family to move into this rather exclusive area. I went to Dwyer Grade School from 1942 to 1946, then to the Mayberry Sanatorium grade school from 1946 to 1947, or was it 1948? Then I attended Northern High School from September 1948 to 1952, graduating with high honors in January 1952.

My life in Detroit was both a simple and complicated one, with some things standing out: the race riot of 1943, when the slow drift toward desegregation untangled the last remnants of Jim Crow in housing and in retail companies, like the J. L. Hudson Department Store, and the complicated discovery of the joys and pains of urban eroticism.

In 1952 I went to Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, rather my father gently tricked me into going to Morehouse College. You see, I had a full four-year scholarship to Michigan State University, but I wouldn’t get it until September 1952. So, since I had a semester to spare, my father suggested that I go down to Morehouse College for that period of time in order to maintain the momentum of my educational development from

high school. It seemed like a good idea to me, and so, on that cold January day, 1952, we headed down to Morehouse for the second semester, way down in Atlanta, Georgia. That period of time, from January 1952 to May 30, 1952 would change my academic evolution away from MSU to a whole other world.

I am a graduate of both black and white institutions: BA Morehouse College, Atlanta Georgia 1956; MA Atlanta University 1958, same city; Ph. D. the University of Chicago 1969, all with a focus on socio-political and socio-theistic themes in literature, especially in 19th century U.S. American works. In addition, I have taught at a variety of institutions of higher education – Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Emory University, Wabash College, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a variety of community colleges, Chicago State University, the University of Illinois Circle Campus, Columbia College, and finally ending up at my terminal assignment, DeVry Institute of Technology/DeVry University – Chicago Campus.

My religious background is as follows: ordained as a Baptist minister in 1961, accepted as such by the Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship in 2009, but not fellowshiped; a lay member of the First Unitarian Church of Chicago since 1992, and serving as the spokesperson for the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus now Council. And I have had a variety of preaching opportunities ranging from chapel services at Morehouse College to Baptist churches in Detroit and Atlanta, plus Asheville, North Carolina and Anderson, South Carolina and being the guest preacher at Unitarian Universalist churches, mainly in Indiana and Illinois.

My political history has been varied. In 1968, as a result of the killing of Martin Luther King Junior and after a period of time of opposing his militancy and opposing his stance against the Vietnam War, I decided to join his movement. Posthumously. I created an interracial group of faculty and students at Morehouse called The Black Action Committee. Our job was to ensure that along with other positive civil rights organizations that white people would be welcomed to the funeral in light of the threat by some Black Power activists to keep them from coming. As a result of all of our work, we had a successful funeral service. Later in 1968 I participated in the Maynard Jackson campaign to become the first black senator from Georgia since the Reconstruction Period, part of the Atlanta wing of the Poor People's Campaign. I also became the first black professor at Emory University, part time during the summer session.

Thereafter I worked with the Black Panther Party Educational Project in Indiana (1969-1972), was a candidate for Congress and Governor with the Indiana Peace and Freedom Party (1970-1972), a founder and co-chair of the InterNational Committee Against Racism (1973-1993), and a former member of the Fourth Ward Democratic Party Committee in Chicago. Part of my political duties have included speaking and lecturing around the country on issues of racial justice, from New York City to Seattle Washington, from Minneapolis, Minnesota to New Orleans, Louisiana.

My personal life:

I have been married three times. My first wife was Liliane, 1960-1971. I had two children with her, Paulette Leonie and Philip Calvin. She disagreed with my decision to become a Panther organizer and took the children and returned to Geneva, Switzerland. Philip has three children: Lya, Laissa, and Lanny.

My second wife was Vicki Leigh Sanders, 1971-1988. She was a member of a Panther ally group in Toledo, OH called the National Committee Against Fascism and eventually my campaign manager when I ran for governor of Indiana. In the 70's she headed up the midwestern office of the InterNational Committee Against Racism and later was a participant in the Chicago chapter. Personal and political contradictions ended the marriage in 1988. Through her I had a son and a foster daughter, David Sanders Campbell and Kathleen Johnson. David has a daughter, Anatasia and Kathleen also a daughter.

My third and final wife was Roberta (Bobbi) Lammers Campbell. We also met through INCAR and later a group called the Catacombs Koinonia and find ourselves mutually compatible. She was also one of the core founders of the Caucus version of UUMUAC. We have been married as couple and comrades since 1986. She brought two children, Mark and Kathi, to our marriage. Via Kathi, I have two grandchildren, Bryana and Taylor.

Much more could be said but for now this gives you a sketch of my life, a life dedicated in a variety of ways to building the Rainbow of Steel.