

Robert L. Green was born on November 23, 1933 in Detroit, Michigan. He earned a B.A. in psychology and a M.A. in school psychology, both from the San Francisco State College. He earned his Ph.D. in educational psychology from MSU in 1963 and remained there as an instructor and professor. In 1968 he was named the director of the University's Center for Urban Affairs. He was later named the Dean of the College of Urban Development when it was created in 1972, becoming the first African American dean at MSU. While at MSU, Green was credited with pushing the Big Ten athletic conference to hire its first African American football and basketball officials. Additionally, his work helped end housing discrimination in East Lansing, and his work in recruiting and mentoring students of color helped produce graduates who hold major leadership roles in American society. In 1983, Green became president of the University of the District of Columbia, serving until 1985. Green is an expert on education, urban development, and diversity, writing numerous books and professional articles on those topics, and he served as an expert witness in more than 20 school desegregation cases. During a leave of absence from MSU between 1965 and 1967, Green served as the Education Director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, working closely with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In 2002, Green received the Gandhi, King, Ikeda Award for Human Rights and Peace Initiatives from Morehouse College, the alma mater of Dr. King. In 2004, Green was honored with Michigan State's Distinguished Alumni Award.