



STATE SENATOR ANTHONY H. WILLIAMS

BIOGRAPHY

Anthony Hardy Williams never dreamed he'd hold elective office growing up. After graduating from Franklin & Marshall College, he planned to use his economics degree to take over the business world. He worked as a corporate analyst, next as an executive for PepsiCo, and then launched his own vending company. Then, his world exploded – literally.

That's when he watched part of his neighborhood engulfed in flames during the 1985 MOVE standoff in Philadelphia. He saw hopelessness creeping into formerly vibrant communities. He watched companies closing and jobs leaving across Pennsylvania. Fear rose. Opportunities waned. Something needed to be done. Someone had to address the issues hanging over kitchen tables and boardroom tables alike. Someone had to have better ideas. At 31, he decided to try and tackle that challenge.

Since joining the Pennsylvania Legislature – first as state representative of the 191st District in 1988, then as state senator of the 8th District in 1998 – he resolved to make the needs of his constituents known, and has, with solid results.

He served as an original architect of Pennsylvania's landmark charter school legislation, ushering in an era of expanded options for families. He created the Philadelphia Illegal Gun Task Force, an invaluable law enforcement tool for curbing violence. He developed the Diversity Apprenticeships Program, providing access to the labor trades for thousands of young men and women. He authored legislation which is now law to protect students in school from sexual predators, and he's still crafting meaningful legislation that champions real world solutions.

His commonsense, yet fearless, approach to leadership resists blind party allegiance or indebtedness to its patrons. It's how he operates in the Pennsylvania Senate, where he serves as Democratic Whip, and a member of the Education, Environmental Resources & Energy, Intergovernmental Operations, Law and Justice, Policy and State Government committees. His sense of advocacy compelled him to join the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, along with several community boards.

As senator for the 8th District, he connects with and offers solutions for citizens in small towns, suburban enclaves, and urban centers, serving people of all economic, ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds with sensibility and compassion.

This stems from the moral courage instilled in him by his father, the late Hardy Williams, the pioneering activist and former state senator, and his mother, Carole Williams-Green, a feisty and committed retired public school educator. It is replenished by the inspiration he finds in his wife, Shari, their two daughters, Asia and Autumn, and grandson Brendon.

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