

Vincent S. Morgan Biography



Vince Morgan is a beacon of light in New York politics. He is a rarity today, a successful community banker and family man, who is standing up to challenge the political status quo that has failed to deliver for the majority of people that live in the 15th Congressional district of New York. He says, "I simply grew frustrated with the current divisions in our community and want more people involved in the decision making process of how to allocate scarce resources and set priorities for the community. By working together everyone moves forward."

Morgan has been a Harlem resident since moving to New York more than a decade ago. Like many Upper Manhattan professionals, he is committed to raising his family in a vibrant, diverse community that is rich in history and has limitless potential. But just living in one of the world's most culturally rich neighborhoods is not enough for Vince. Aspiring to be "more than just a good neighbor," he has dedicated his life to public service and the betterment of his community. His efforts toward community building and economic empowerment will culminate when he is elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

"I am reminded every day," says Vince, "that many people in the 15th Congressional District are not achieving their full potential. As the neighborhood has changed, many people have not benefitted from the building boom. Economic opportunities for many residents remain limited and public education isn't meeting the needs of most of our children."

Vince is a member of the prominent Ford family of Memphis, TN. The son of former Senator John Ford, he was estranged from his father before birth and was raised by a single mother on the tough inner city streets of Chicago's Southside where he confronted urban decay, poverty and violence everyday. Vince like many youth in his neighborhood dropped out of high school when he was 16-years-old. After succumbing to peer pressure and teenage angst he began to turn his life around. He got his life back on track with the support of a concerned teacher who encouraged him to earn his GED and go back to school. He went on to attend Howard University and ultimately received a bachelor's degree in business from the University of Illinois at Chicago. He later obtained a master's degree in public administration from Columbia University in New York.

Before settling in Harlem, Vince lived for three years in post-apartheid Johannesburg, South Africa. He worked as a marketing and distribution manager for international technology companies. This firsthand experience in the fledgling democracy of South Africa clarified Vince's path toward public service. "It was a powerful time in my life and I was overwhelmed by the experience of witnessing the birth of a new nation."

In 2001, became unemployed during the economic downturn caused by the technology industry collapse.

Never one to sit idle Vince volunteered for service in the office legendary Congressman Charlie Rangel, soon he joined the staff as a special assistant where he focused on economic development and community outreach programs. Vince always makes an impact and is credited with resurrecting the district office college internship program and redesigning and upgrading the technology in the district office to better serve constituents. Vincent cites constituent work and his most rewarding experience in his career and the catalyst in his desire to seek higher office.

He then moved on to the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation, where he continued making an impact. He is credited created the successful "Swing Uptown" tourism campaign to boost Harlem's economic vitality and to support local businesses. There he forged strong bonds with the local arts and culture community and with many local business owners.

In 2005, Vince met the beautiful and talented Shola Lynch, a Peabody award-winning documentary filmmaker whose life mission is to catalog extraordinary people who have shaped our world, including Chisholm '72 about Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm and her new project on activist Angela Davis. The couple married in 2006 and is now the proud parents of two young children: Julian and Violet.

To support his growing family, Vince went to work at TD Bank as a community development banker. Wanting to have an impact on every day working people, Vince worked tirelessly to identify opportunities for the bank to invest in Northern Manhattan in the form of loans, grants and other investments. As a vice president, He was responsible for the federally mandated CRA obligations of the bank statewide. His primary focus was commercial lending to affordable housing developers, funding organizations that provide services to low-to-moderate income families and small business lending. Vince is credited with building bank relationships with some of the state's most prominent business, real estate, non-profit and community entities. He was instrumental in over \$10 million in investment in Upper Manhattan during his tenure at the bank.

As chairman of the 125th Street Business Improvement District (BID), Vince championed revitalization efforts of one of the world's most famous thoroughfares. He was instrumental in launching Harlem's "Light It Up" campaign, which raised money to illuminate 125th Street for the 2010 holiday season. The campaign, a model for cooperation among the business, academic, non-profit and political communities in Northern Manhattan, garnered global attention.

Vince has served as a director on many boards, including The Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce, The Theatre of the Riverside Church, The Harlem Biennale, The International Leadership High School. He has also served on the advisory boards of Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine and Alianza Dominicana. He is also a proud member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and a graduate of the FBI Citizens Academy and the NYC Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) in Harlem.

"My experiences abroad and in community banking taught me that the way to navigate the reality of a global economy and survive the pressures of gentrification is to develop new paradigms of leadership," says Vince. "As citizens of Uptown, we have to set our own agenda for community sustainability and economic inclusion, fully aware that new development is essential, but not at the detriment of the existing population who make Harlem their home."