



Biography of The Honourable Senator Anne Cools



Senator Anne Cools is an Ontario Senator representing Toronto-Centre-York. She was summoned to the Senate in January 1984 by His Excellency Governor General Edward Schreyer on the recommendation of the Rt. Hon. Pierre Trudeau. She is the first black person appointed to the Senate of Canada and is the first black female senator in North America.

Born August 12, 1943 in Barbados, British West Indies, at age 13 she moved to Montreal with her family. Senator Cools was educated at Queen's College Girls School, Barbados; Thomas D'Arcy McGee High School, Montreal; and Montreal's McGill University, from which she holds a Bachelor of Arts. In the 1979 and 1980 federal general elections, Anne Cools was a candidate with Trudeau's Liberals in Toronto's Rosedale riding. In June 2004, after 20 years as a Liberal Senator, she joined the Conservatives for a short time. Currently, Senator Cools has no party affiliation and sits as an Independent.

Prior to the Senate, Senator Cools was a social worker in innovative social services in Toronto. In 1974, as a pioneer in domestic and family violence, she founded one of Canada's first women's shelters, Women in Transition Inc., serving as its Executive Director. She assisted with the establishment of several other women's shelters in Ontario. In the 1970s, in the forefront of social and family violence services, Senator Cools acted as a field supervisor for students in social services from Ryerson University, Seneca College, and the University of Toronto's Faculty of Social Work. She was the Field Advisor to the York University doctoral student who wrote Canada's first doctoral thesis on domestic violence. Senator Cools recently acted as field advisor to doctoral students from the McGill University Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology.

By four Order-in-Council appointments, Senator Cools served from 1980 to 1984 as a Member (Temp.) of the National Parole Board of Canada, the parole authority for inmates in federal correctional institutions. She was instrumental in the creation of the Special Senate-House of Commons Joint Committee on child custody and access after divorce. The Joint Committee's 1998 report *For the Sake of the Children* recommended shared parenting.

Senator Cools has received many awards, including Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree, 2004, Canada Christian College, Toronto, ON; Woman of Excellence Leadership Award 2004, National Centre for Strategic Non-profit Planning and Community Leadership, Washington, D.C.; Person of the Year 1999, REAL Women of Canada, for her support and work with families; and Spiritual Mother of the Year, 1997, NA'AMAT, the international Jewish Women's Organization that supports battered women's shelters in Israel.

Senator Cools is married and is a member of the Anglican Church. Her personal interests include reading, classical music, piano, gardening, and dogs.