

# Who was Mervyn M. Dymally?

Dear Caregiver or Educator,

We are delighted to share standards-based lessons featuring bridge-builder Mervyn M. Dymally with you and your students. We invite you to use lessons like *Who was Mervyn M. Dymally?* for learning in the classroom or at home.

*Who was Mervyn M. Dymally?* was inspired by an Autry Classroom Curators (ACC) partnership with California State University, Los Angeles (Cal State LA). Created by the Autry's Education department, ACC is a project-based learning program for kindergarten through college educators and students. *Who was Mervyn M. Dymally?* is about public educator, politician, and Cal State LA alumnus Mervyn M. Dymally (1926-2012). This lesson was based on an online exhibition called *Mervyn M. Dymally: The Bridge-Builder of Los Angeles*. Cal State LA students and staff including Dr. Dawn A. Dennis (Faculty, the Department of History), Azalea Camacho (Archivist and Special Collections Librarian), and Kendall Faulkner (Social Sciences Librarian) created the online exhibition. Dr. Dennis shared her inspiration for the online exhibition as follows:

*"It all started with a brick... In early 2019, I met with Azalea Camacho and noticed this brick encased in glass sitting on top of an archival box. What is THIS piece of history, I asked. Azalea confirmed that the brick (from 1965) and the collection of materials (nearly 300 boxes of correspondence, photos, and ephemera called the Dymally papers) were donated by Mervyn M. Dymally. That same day, Azalea and I began designing a collaborative project that would engage undergraduate students in several history courses. We developed a year-long, project-based, active-learning experience that moved beyond the lectern and out of the classroom through teaching history, archival practice, and primary source analysis to first-generation undergraduate students. We introduced students to the college archives early in their academic career to foster inquiry and growth, develop research and informational literacy skills, and to build community. Azalea and I taught the students how to process correspondence and photographs from the Dymally papers. A total of 63 boxes were processed by students. Students also contributed to the building of the online exhibition which opened on March 17, 2021. The online exhibition opening featured a keynote speech by Congresswoman Judy Chu and historical reflections from Dr. Lynn V. Dymally (Dymally's daughter). The online exhibition focuses on the power of story by amplifying the work of Dymally and his collaboration with various communities to strengthen our relationship to underserved communities that are not adequately represented in educational curriculum and institutional archives. To learn more about Mervyn M. Dymally, please visit the online exhibition at <https://calstatela-exhibits.libraryhost.com/exhibits/show/mervyn-m--dymally-bridgebuilde>."*

The Autry's Education department provided support for the *Mervyn M. Dymally: The Bridge-Builder of Los Angeles* online exhibition by co-creating several K-12 standards-based lessons featuring Mervyn M. Dymally with Dr. Dennis, Ms. Camacho, and Ms. Faulkner. We encourage you to share *Who was Mervyn M. Dymally?* with students in kindergarten through second grade. For the most recent educational resources on Mervyn M. Dymally, please check out the Autry Museum's Education webpage at <https://theautry.org/education> or the online exhibition webpage at <https://calstatela-exhibits.libraryhost.com/exhibits/show/mervyn-m--dymally-bridgebuilde>.

Sincerely,

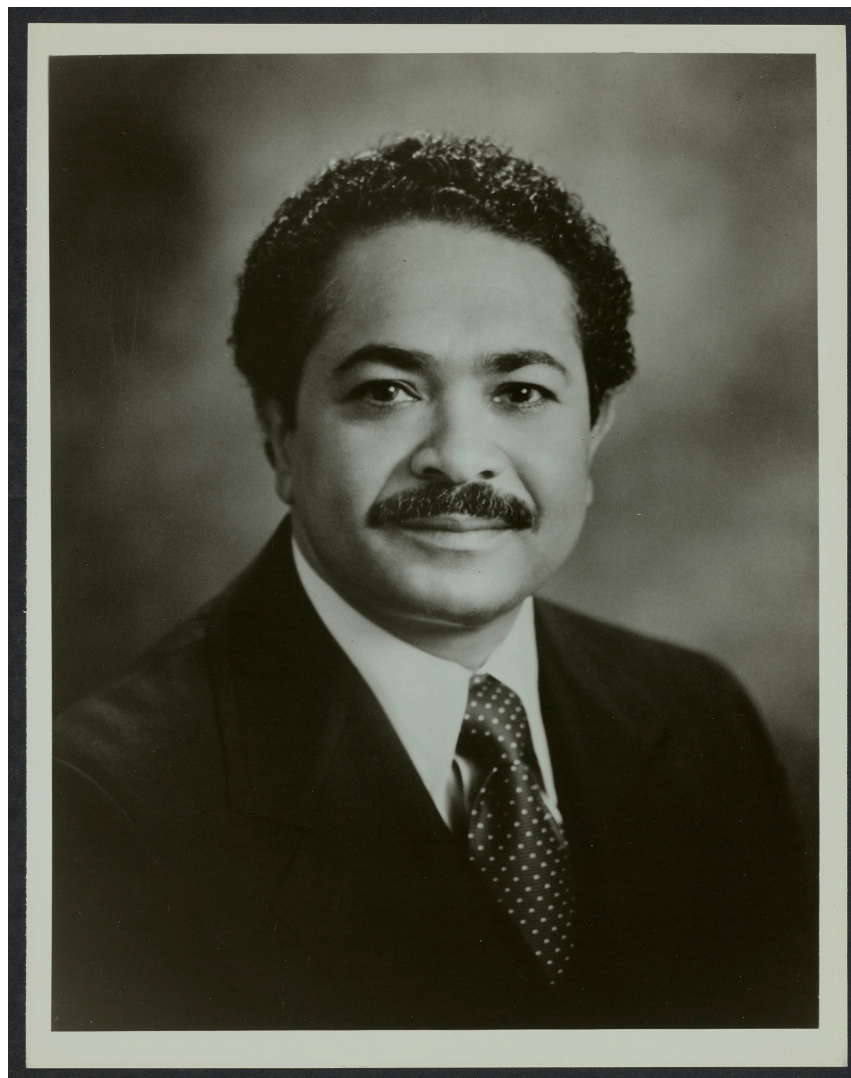
Sarah S. Wilson  
Director of Education



# *Who was Mervyn M. Dymally?*

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**INTRODUCTION** – Who was Mervyn M. Dymally (DIME-uh-lee)? Mervyn was an important person. He was born in a country called Trinidad and Tobago in 1926. When Mervyn was 19 years old, he moved to the United States of America. After moving, Mervyn spent most of his life in the American West. He helped a lot of people during his lifetime. Mervyn lived to be 86 years old. Here is a photograph of Mervyn M. Dymally.

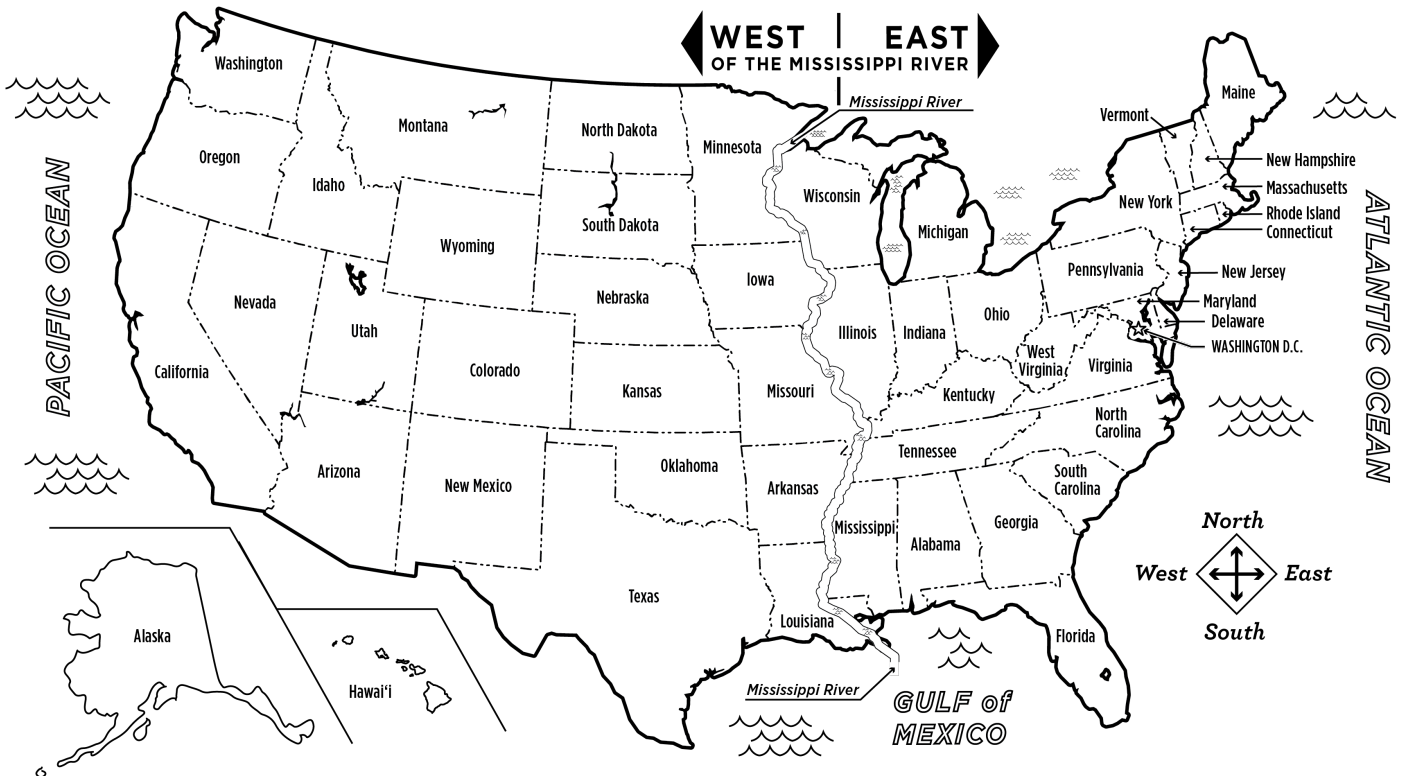


# Who was Mervyn M. Dymally?

**PART 1** - Mervyn lived and worked in the American West for many years. Learn more about where the American West is located by completing the mapping activity below.

**Directions:** Find some colored pencils, crayons, or markers. Then figure out where the American West is located on the map of the United States of America by following these steps.

- A) Find the Pacific Ocean on the map. Color it blue.
- B) Find the Atlantic Ocean on the map. Color it blue.
- C) Find the Gulf of Mexico on the map. Color it blue.
- D) Find the Mississippi River on the map. Color it blue.
- E) Find the states that are east (to the right) of the Mississippi River on the map. Color them yellow.
- F) The American West includes everything west (to the left) of the Mississippi River including Alaska and Hawai'i. Find the states that are west (to the left) of the Mississippi River on the map. Color them green.
- G) Mervyn lived and worked in the state of California for many years. Find California. Circle it.



# Who was Mervyn M. Dymally?

**PART 2** - Mervyn believed that all people should be treated **equally**. He helped all kinds of people through the work that he did. Being an activist, a politician, and a teacher were some of the jobs that Mervyn had. Learn more about the different jobs that Mervyn had by completing the matching activity below.

**Directions:** Read the job descriptions on the left-hand side. Then look at the photographs of Mervyn doing different types of work on the right-hand side. In the space below, match the job descriptions with the correct photographs.

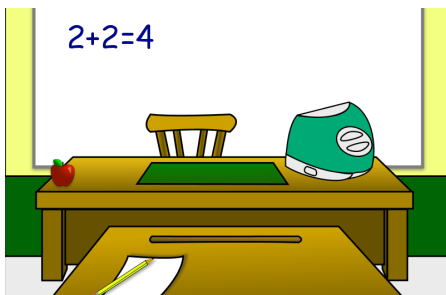
## Job Descriptions



An *activist* is someone who takes part in activities to help change something.



A *politician* is someone who is **elected** to work in **government**.



A *teacher* is someone who teaches others how to do something.

## Photographs



Mervyn taught elementary students.



Mervyn took part in activities to help everyone have freedom.



Mervyn worked for the government.

## ***Glossary***

**Elected:** to choose someone to do something through voting

**Equally:** the same

**Government:** the group of people who control and make decisions for a city, state, country, etc.

# Who was Mervyn M. Dymally?

**PART 3** - Mervyn helped people in different communities through the jobs that he did. A community can be a group of people who live in the same area such as a neighborhood, town, or city. What kinds of jobs help people in the community you live in?

Think about the different types of jobs that people have in places like the fire station, hospital, library, or school in your community. Pick one job that helps people in your community. Then answer the questions in the space below or on a separate piece of paper.

A) What is the name of a job that helps people in your community?

The name of the job is a/an \_\_\_\_\_

B) What does this job do?

This job \_\_\_\_\_

C) What does doing this job look like? Draw a picture of someone doing this job.

**My Picture**

**PART 4** - Tell a classmate, family member, friend, or teacher about a job that helps people in your community. Then share your picture from PART 3 with them.

# Who was Mervyn M. Dymally?

**PART 5** - What would you like to be when you grow up? Pick one job that you would like to do when you are older. Then answer the questions in the space below or on a separate piece of paper.

A) What job would you like to do when you grow up? Why?

When I grow up, I want to be a/an \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

B) What does this job do?

This job \_\_\_\_\_

C) What does doing this job look like? Draw a picture of you doing this job.

**My Picture**

**PART 6** - Tell a classmate, family member, friend, or teacher about the job that you want to do when you grow up. Then share your picture from PART 5 with them.

# Resources

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A photo of Dymally and his class in 1953, Courtesy of Lynn V. Dymally.

“Government.” *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/government>. Accessed 6 May. 2021.

[http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-M\\_yq2ap8OZ0/U9-MieDFEOI/AAAAAAAAABVM/nBJZnnjllko/s1600/classroom.png](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-M_yq2ap8OZ0/U9-MieDFEOI/AAAAAAAAABVM/nBJZnnjllko/s1600/classroom.png). Retrieved March 9, 2022. CC BY-NC-ND.

[http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-HOFn5C2Va94/TsvsBILuL2I/AAAAAAAAAC7E/amkTSX\\_Uex0/s1600/American-Flag-Wall-Art%255B1%255D.jpg](http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-HOFn5C2Va94/TsvsBILuL2I/AAAAAAAAAC7E/amkTSX_Uex0/s1600/American-Flag-Wall-Art%255B1%255D.jpg). Retrieved March 9, 2022. CC BY-NC-ND.

“Mervyn M. Dymally: The Bridge-Builder of Los Angeles.” California State University, Los Angeles, <https://calstatela-exhibits.libraryhost.com/exhibits/show/mervyn-m--dymally-bridgebuilde>. Accessed May 4, 2021.

Mervyn M. Dymally with Edward Roybal, Matthew G. Martinez, Esteban E. Torres, 1988, Mervyn M. Dymally Papers, Special Collections & Archives, California State University, Los Angeles.

Mervyn M. Dymally with other protestors in Selma in 1965, Mervyn M. Dymally Papers, Special Collections & Archives, California State University, Los Angeles.

Portrait of Dymally, Mervyn M. Dymally Papers, Special Collections & Archives, California State University, Los Angeles.

Socialbrite, <https://www.socialbrite.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Fotolia.jpg>. Retrieved March 9, 2022. CC BY.

United States of America Map Illustration by Alban Cooper