

Biography of Sarah-Ann Shaw

Sarah-Ann Shaw is a lifelong resident of Roxbury. She was born at the New England Hospital, now The Dimock Center. A graduate of the Boston Public Schools (Girls' Latin School), Shaw also attended Boston University. She has been an activist for most of her personal and professional life. Over the years her volunteer time has been dedicated to the fight for human and civil rights, as shown by her commitment to the success of many organizations.

In 1969, she was hired as the first Black woman reporter at WBZ-TV, where she worked for 31 years as a general assignment reporter. She retired from the station in 2000. During those years, Shaw covered a wide range of daily news stories, and also developed special reports that illustrated positive contributions made by Black, Asian, and Latino residents of Massachusetts. In this way she tried to dispel stereotypes held by Whites about people of color, while providing positive images of urban life. Her stories gave balance to those most often under-represented by media outlets. From 1969 to 2000 her special reports focused on the importance of providing all people with the same social, economic, and educational opportunities.

She has been honored by a variety of organizations. Mount Ida College awarded her an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters Degree in 2014 and in that same year ABCD, Boston's anti-poverty agency, inducted her into its Lifetime Achievement Hall of Fame.

Shaw serves as a board member of several institutions such as Boston Neighborhood Network TV, The Friends of Dudley Library Inc., Boston Senior Homecare, and The League of Women for Community Service. Sarah-Ann has also been active with a number of advisory committees, including Boston University School of Medicine Dean's Advisory Board, the Dudley Vision Advisory Task Force, and others specifically established to address problems of hunger, homelessness, diversity, and disparities in health care. Previously, she was on the boards of the Ford Hall Forum, Central Boston Elder Services, the Executive Service Corps Inc. and the MA Broadcaster's Hall of Fame.

Others have acknowledged her contributions to the city. On Mother's Day in May 2016 she received the "Open Door" award in honor of Phyllis Wheatley from Old South Church. In 2014, she and her daughter Klare were among those featured in the book, "Portraits of Purpose: A Tribute to Leadership," by Don West and Kenneth Cooper. In 2007, mother and daughter received an Intergenerational Activist Award from "Teen Voices" magazine. In 2006, the Advent School presented Shaw "the Mona Hull Founder's Award for Education for Social Justice". That same year she accepted the "Take a Stand Award" from the Boston Women's Fund. A "Community Legend" award was bestowed upon her in 2004 by Pleasant Hill Baptist Church. In 2003, she received an Abigail Adams Award from the Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus. A real treat was the 2001 "A Hero Among Us" award presented by the Boston Celtics.

In the year 2000 she received two major media awards from her peers; a "Lifetime Achievement Award" from Emerson College RTNDA (Radio Television News Directors Association), and "The Yankee Quill Award" from The New England Society of Newspaper Editors. In 1998, the National Association of Black Journalists honored her with its Lifetime Achievement Award, acknowledging her help in establishing the organization. The NAACP Boston Branch, the Cambridge YWCA, Rosie's Place, the Boston Association of Black Journalists, The Irish Immigration Center, Action for Boston Community Development, Black Educators Association of MA, and others have also honored her. She has one grown daughter, two adult grandchildren, and one great-grandson. In her loving extended family she also has an adopted daughter, son and grandson.