

First Black US Secretary of State Colin Powell Dies from COVID at 84

Gen. Colin Powell, the first Black U.S. Secretary of State and former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of staff who played a pivotal role in the George W. Bush presidential administration, died Monday morning at 84 from complications related to COVID-19, his family announced on Facebook.

Powell was fully vaccinated, according to the announcement.

"We have lost a remarkable and loving husband, father, grandfather and a great American," the family statement said.

Powell distinguished himself as a professional soldier from combat duty in Vietnam to becoming the first Black national security adviser during the tail end of the Reagan administration in the 1980s. He became the youngest and first African-American chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under Bush and served in Bush's Cabinet during the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

He became popular and well known during the Gulf War and was considered in the mid-1990s as a leading candidate to become the first Black President of the United States. Powell never made a bid for the White House, but at the time, he became the highest-ranking Black public official to date in this country.

During his confirmation hearing for Secretary of State, Powell said, "I think it shows to the world what is possible in this country. "It shows to the world that: Follow our model, and over a period of time from our beginning, if you believe in the values that espouse, you can see things as miraculous as me sitting before you to receive your approval."

Later in his public life, he flipped his political affiliation and helped elect Democrats to the White House. He endorsed Barack Obama for the presidency in 2008, and Obama became the first Black President of the United States.

Powell is survived by his wife, Alma. The couple would have celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in 2022. {eo}

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