



Student Name:
Class Period:
Date:

Meet the Originals

Texas Originals is a radio series about people who made an impact on Texas. You can hear it online and on radio stations around the state. Read or listen to the episode on George Thomas "Mickey" Leland. Then, answer questions about it.

George Thomas "Mickey" Leland 1944–1989

When the Texas House of Representatives met in January 1973, three of the new members were the first African Americans legislators elected to the House since Reconstruction. One of these, twenty-eight-year-old Mickey Leland, entered the Capitol wearing an Afro and a vibrant dashiki. The *New York Times* described him as “a jolt to the conservative Texas body.”

Raised in Houston, Leland was committed to providing jobs for underrepresented groups and health care for the poor. After earning a degree in pharmacy from Texas Southern University, he pushed city officials to establish public health clinics in low-income communities.

Leland remained in the state legislature until 1978, when he won Barbara Jordan’s seat in the U.S. Congress. In Washington, he continued to fight for social justice and the rights of underserved groups.

Leland is best remembered for his fight to end global starvation. He helped create the House Select Committee on World Hunger and in 1985, urged Congress to send \$800 million in famine relief funds to Africa. Tragically, on his sixth trip to Africa, a plane carrying Leland and fifteen others crashed en route to a refugee camp in Ethiopia.

Leland often quoted the Talmud, saying, “If you save one life, you save the whole world.” Today, the Congressional Hunger Center honors his legacy through the Mickey Leland International Hunger Fellows Program, which trains leaders in ending global starvation.

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on George Thomas "Mickey" Leland. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. How did the *New York Times* describe Mickey Leland after his election to the Texas House of Representatives in 1973?
2. What causes did Leland champion during his political career, and how did he try to promote those causes?

Going Further: Write or discuss your answer to the question below, supporting your answer with evidence from the episode or additional information you have learned in class.

3. **Making Inferences.** What do you think is meant by, “if you save one life, you save the whole world,” the passage from the Talmud that Leland often quoted? Explain.