



John Y. Brown Jr.

- International Businessman
- Entrepreneur
- Kentucky Governor

Biography of John Y. Brown Jr.

John Y. Brown Jr. became **Kentucky's 55th Governor** on December 11th, 1979 after an outstanding career as a businessman and corporate executive. He is known by all as a self-made man having earned his own way from the age of 16 years old by selling Electrolux vacuum cleaners. From 1953 to 1956, while attending the University of Kentucky, Brown paid his way through college making as much as \$25,000 in a year as the Branch manager for Encyclopedia Britannica. He was recognized by Encyclopedia Britannica for once setting a national monthly sales record for a territory his size, as well as being acclaimed with the 1980 "**National Award for Achievement in Life**" which exemplifies the ideas of excellence, human enlightenment and leadership.

In the summer of 1960, Brown passed the Kentucky bar exam and began to practice law with his father with the law firm name "Brown and Son". Shortly thereafter, he showed his independence by moving his law office to Louisville, Kentucky where the firm was called "Brown and Father", where he practiced law for two years.

At the age of 29, with the financial help of his partner Jack C. Massey of Nashville, Tennessee, together they purchased **Kentucky Fried Chicken Corporation** from its founder **Colonel Harland Sanders** for two-million dollars. From 1964 through 1971, Brown established a worldwide reputation as a businessman and entrepreneur when he built the company into the world's largest food service company by establishing 3500 KFC restaurants. He is credited with building the "Colonel" into the world's most recognized personal brand. After going public the company was sold for \$285 Million to Hublein Inc.



Brown's interest in politics started in his early youth when he managed his father's campaign for a number of statewide races during the 1950's and 1960's. In 1972 he was named national Honorary Treasurer of the Democratic Party, after he conceived and chaired a series of national TV telethons that ultimately raised \$19 Million to help save the party from bankruptcy. In September, 1983 the National Democratic Party recognized Governor Brown for his "innovative fundraising" techniques and other contributions to the party, and named him Democrat of the Year.



On March 27, 1979, Brown announced his intention to enter his first political race for **Governor of Kentucky**. He won handily in a whirlwind sixty-day campaign. Brown used his business expertise in filling his administration with successful business entrepreneurs and keeping his campaign pledge of "**Running Government like a Business**". He received national recognition for reducing the size of government by 22%, while projecting Kentucky as a leading state in attracting new industry. He used the nationally publicized slogan "**Kentucky & Co. – The State That Is Run Like a Business**".



John Y. Brown Jr.

- International Businessman
- Entrepreneur
- Kentucky Governor

Biography of John Y. Brown Jr. (page2 of 2)

During the 1970's, Brown entered the professional sports arena serving as **President of the American Basketball Association** and owning the **Kentucky Colonels** with his wife. After the league was absorbed into the National Basketball Association, Brown became the owner of the Buffalo Braves and then traded that team for the **Boston Celtics** in 1978, before selling out, when he ran for Governor of Kentucky.

Also during the 1970's, Brown was active in a number of charitable contributions to his community and state. Brown made a matching gift of \$1 Million dollars to build the downtown Louisville YMCA. He did the same in partnership with the state of Kentucky, in establishing the Sanders-Brown Research Center on Aging at the University of Kentucky, in honor of Colonel Harland Sanders and his father, John Y. Brown Sr.

Brown received a number of national and local community awards for his leadership as a businessman and a public servant. In July, 1980 Brown received the "**American Academy of Achievement Award**" in Los Angeles, CA, with a citation for his "spectacular rise from businessman to governor outside of the traditional political structure". In the late 1970's he was recognized as "**Entrepreneur of the Year**" by the International Franchise Association where he was introduced as an entrepreneur before he knew how to spell it. In May, 1982 he was the recipient of the "**Father of the year Award**" from the National Father's Day Committee. In 1992, Brown was recognized as "**Speaker of the Year**" by the National Platform Association in Washington, DC and in 1994 he was awarded "**CEO of the Year**" by NACORE. He has been inducted into numerous Hall of Fames during his career, most recently in 2007 by the **University of Kentucky Law School Hall of Fame** as one of two honorees. In 2007, Brown helped open the "**Muhammad Ali Center.**"



Recently, in November of 2009, after an eight year study the Harvard Business School named Brown among the "**Great American Business Leaders of the 20th Century**" (www.hbs.edu/leadership/database/) recognizing Brown along with **Ray Kroc** for building the fast food industry as it is known today.

This year Governor Brown is being honored by "Nation's Restaurant news" with the "**Pioneer of the Year**" award. "Entrepreneur Magazine" has selected Governor Brown to be their keynote speaker at their annual "**Entrepreneur Magazine's Growth 2.0 Conference**" in January 2011.

Governor Brown is renowned as one of America's foremost entrepreneurs; he has always challenged the traditional methods of doing business. He continuously looks to explore opportunities in paths that have yet to be traveled. **Brown's focus has been in the food industry and franchising.**