

Biar K. Atem

Atem was born in South Sudan and was forced to abandon his family and village when the civil war threatened his life. War in South Sudan severed a generation of *Lost Boys* from their birthplace and their families. At age seven, Atem became a child refugee and walked more than 1,000 miles before reaching a refugee camp in Kenya, spending the next 13 years in refugee camps in Ethiopia and Kenya before Catholic Charities resettled him to Las Vegas in April 2001 as a refugee.

Atem started out as a janitor with the Venetian Casino Resort in May 2001. He became a U.S. citizen in 2007 and was reunited with his family in 2008 when he visited home after more than 20 years away. Atem worked his way up from a janitor at the Venetian to a contract audit manager with shared services at Las Vegas Sands Corp. He is a Certified Fraud Examiner. He is also a proud husband and a father of two sons. He earned a bachelor's degree in Accounting from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and an MBA from Regis University.

Today, Atem personifies a “rags-to-riches” success story. In 2014, he was named to Fortune Magazine's “Heroes of the 500” for helping others who are suffering from persecution and poverty.¹ He is the founder of the nonprofit South Sudan Center of America, a charity that helps refugees and immigrants to meet basic needs, provide scholarships, and organize cultural celebrations.

He has received numerous awards for his involvement in the community. In February 2017, Atem was named a finalist for the Adelson Citizenship Award and Sands Cares Hero of the Year. In October, he was named “Community Impact Award Winner – 2016 Everyday Heroes” by the American Red Cross.

Atem is involved with various local and national organizations. He is the Nevada Delegate to the Refugee Congress, on the advisory board of the ECDC African Community Center, a mentor for UNLV Hotel College, and a speaker for CCSD School-Community Partnership Program.

Atem is passionate about giving back to the community. He shares his life story to inspire young people to finish school and become role models in the community.

“Having seen so much cruelty and pain in my life, I have concluded that developing a heart of compassion is the meaning of life...”

- Biar K. Atem

¹ <http://fortune.com/heroes-of-the-fortune-500/2014/biar-atem-44/>