



STOKES

Reflecting on 50 Years, 1967-2017
Honoring the Past, Inspiring
the Future

FEBRUARY 23 - JULY 31, 2017
AT THE STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES ART GALLERY





CLE Temporary Art Exhibition Program

CLE Temporary Art Exhibition Program was created to showcase the diversity of arts and culture of the Cleveland Plus Region. Museums, cultural institutions, art organizations as well as individual artists are afforded opportunities to exhibit their collections of original artwork and photography in the airport.

To browse current and past exhibitions or for more information, please visit www.clevelandairport.com.



For more than five decades Louis and Carl Stokes dominated every aspect of black political life in the city of Cleveland. Carl Stokes was elected to the Ohio House of Representatives in 1962 and served three terms. He was the first African American member of the Democratic Party elected to the Ohio House. In 1965, Stokes again sought election as Cleveland's mayor and lost. Two years later he ran again and defeated the grandson of former President William H. Taft, becoming the first African American to serve as a mayor of a major U.S. City. His brother, Louis also enjoyed a growing reputation as a prominent Cleveland attorney. Persuaded to run for office by Carl, Louis made

his first run for elective office in 1968 to win the seat in the newly created congressional district that he served for 30 years. With the help of his brother Carl, Louis co-founded the Twenty-First Congressional District Caucus that would serve as his base throughout his long congressional career.

In commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Carl Stokes' election as Mayor and the groundbreaking role of his brother Louis Stokes, this exhibit is dedicated to the Stokes' political leadership.



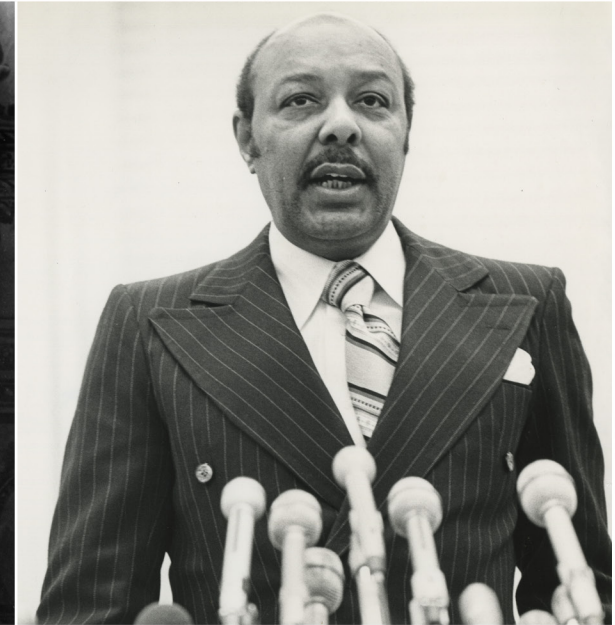
Excerpts from “Promises of Power, Then and Now”

By: Carl B. Stokes

It is now more than 22 years since I began the introduction of black men and women into middle-management positions in city government. I vividly recall the white news media’s searching, critical articles questioning their qualifications.

No one today, other than the appointees themselves, recalls the bitterness and resentment expressed as which City Hall personnel fought being placed under black supervisors. History has proven the caliber and worth of those appointees. For two decades, under three succeeding mayors, these men and women have run the day-to-

day business of this city. So, if Mayor Voinovich and others want to regard this as a well-run, All-American City, the Stokes appointees well deserve some of the credit. History has proven the soundness of my actions and the valuable contribution of those who were given opportunities that had previously been denied them. – Excerpt from Prologue – Giving Black People a Chance in Government, Carl B. Stokes was the 51st Mayor of Cleveland, Ohio and the brother of the late Congressman Louis Stokes.



Excerpts from “The Gentlemen from Ohio”

By: Louis Stokes

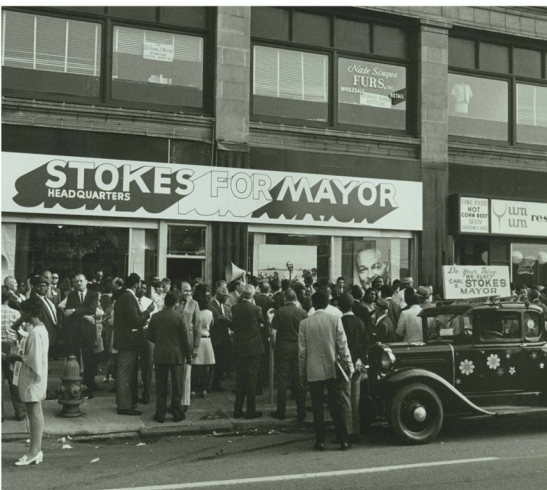
When I was twelve and had started my newspaper reading career, the story of the Scottsboro Boys had flared up again, even though the nine black teenagers had originally been arrested and sentenced in Alabama six years earlier. But the case had gone through appeal after appeal and had become a national fixation. Reading about it mesmerized me. Nine black boys accused of raping two white women while all of them were riding a freight train to Memphis, Tennessee. Almost lynched in Scottsboro, they faced all-white juries and bigoted judges and were, all but one of them who was thirteen, sentenced to the electric chair, the usual fate for blacks accused of raping whites.

But the Communist Party had fastened on the case as an example of American racism and hired lawyers for appeals, which had reached up through the Alabama judicial system all the way to the Supreme Court of the United States. Big constitutional issues were involved, about the exclusion of blacks from juries and the right to a fair trial. At age twelve I’m sure I didn’t understand all the nuances, but the newspaper reports talked of frame-ups and racist police and judges, all of it an eye-opener for me.

Reading about what had happened to the Scottsboro Boys upset me. It made me angry.

But I was also struck by the fact that the lawyers who came in to represent the Scottsboro Boys were white—Samuel Leibowitz, a famous defense attorney from New York, and other white lawyers. That seemed to happen in other cases I read about, too. In Detroit Clarence Darrow had defended a black doctor in a famous case where the doctor was accused of murder while he was defending his home against a mob.

My imagination began to work on these things. I thought a lot about what was happening to black people in the South. I didn’t feel threatened by that kind of thing myself—not where I lived, anyway. But I identified with what was going on in the South where black people were subjected to hatred and violence and couldn’t even get fair trials. I imagined myself as a lawyer traveling around from city to city to defend black people who were accused of crimes they didn’t commit. I would represent them in front of white juries and judges and win my cases by the power of my arguments for justice and what was right. I made up my mind then that when I grew up I would become a defense lawyer, like Leibowitz and Darrow, only I would be a black lawyer defending my own people. – Excerpt from The Gentlemen from Ohio, “Poppin’ the Rag.” Louis Stokes was the first Black Congressmen elected in Ohio.





Acknowledgements

This exhibition is co-curated by the CLE Temporary Art Exhibition Program and The Cleveland Memory Project, Michael Schwartz Library, Cleveland State University.

The CLE Temporary Art Exhibition Program thanks the Carl & Louis Stokes Family Collection, "Stokes: Honoring the Past, Inspiring the Future", a commemoration led by the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Humanities center at Cuyahoga Community College, the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland Foundation, Greater Cleveland Partnership and The City Club of Cleveland and more than 60 community partners.



CLEVELANDAIRPORT.COM