

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Carl & Louis Stokes

This exhibit, **Carl & Louis Stokes Making History**, honors Mayor Carl B. Stokes and his brother, Congressman Louis Stokes, and is built as a continuation of their legacy of leadership, advocacy and action.

The stories of the political careers of Carl & Louis Stokes illuminate and define broader issues in African American and American urban history. While the exhibit celebrates the achievements of Carl and Louis Stokes, it also uses their experiences to reflect on and explore topics such as the Civil Rights Movement, social and economic disparity and the rise and importance of heroes and exemplars.

The lives of Louis and Carl Stokes intersect with major, critical changes in the history of Cleveland and the United States. Carl Stokes was the first African American mayor of a major American city. As mayor, he set an agenda to meet the needs of Cleveland residents regardless of their racial and ethnic background. He won voter approval for schools, housing and numerous other city projects. Equally important, Mayor Stokes demonstrated that in addition to civil rights activism, the cause of economic and social justice could be advanced by understanding the political process. His brother, Louis Stokes, played a groundbreaking role in the legal and political life of the nation serving 15 consecutive terms (30 years) as Congressman. During his tenure he was the chair of the House Select Committee on Assassinations, and a pivotal figure in the Black Democratic Caucus.

The Carl and Louis Stokes story is very much woven into the fabric of this community and leaves a legacy for residents and visitors alike. Their success brings hope to a city that continues to struggle with many of the same issues and hope to the individual who realizes that anyone can make a difference with hard work, determination and vision. Together, their work was a springboard to advance social and economic equality in Cleveland and in the nation.



For Kids!

What does being a hero mean to you?:

Bonus Points: Draw someone who is a hero to you!