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For Immediate Release



Stokes Museum To Serve As Beacon of Hope to Public Housing Residents

CLEVELAND, OHIO, September 19, 2007 – The Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) opened its new Louis Stokes Museum last week in honor of the retired, 15 consecutive term Congressman from Ohio. Raised in CMHA’s Outhwaite Homes, Stokes challenged its residents and others to rise from their impoverished beginnings.

If Carl and I can rise from humble beginnings, you can too, said Louis Stokes to a crowd of about 300 during the September 13 museum opening. Carl Stokes, the late brother of Louis Stokes and a Mayor of Cleveland, Ohio, was the first African American Mayor of a major U.S. city.

“Your address should not define who you are, or who you are to become,” said CMHA CEO George Phillips. Stokes added that many of his childhood friends, who grew up in CMHA public housing, became teachers, lawyers, judges and leaders in other professions.

Stokes credits his success to his widowed mother Louise, who worked as a domestic worker, for instilling good values to her family. Her early advice to him was, “Get something in your head so you don’t have to work with your hands like I’ve had to work with mine.”

The Louis Stokes Museum houses Stokes memorabilia, video interviews, miscellaneous video footage, awards and a written history about Stokes and his rise to prominence. The museum is located at Outhwaite Homes, 4302 Quincy Avenue in Cleveland, Ohio. Hours are from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Wednesdays and Fridays. Private viewings can be scheduled by calling 216-432-3840.

(more)

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The prime construction contractor for the museum was Glory Construction, an African American and female owned enterprise. Architectural design was provided by Lowenstein Duraante Architects and CMHA staff. CMHA Program Coordinator Tony Jeffries served as the museum Curator. Hector Vega, CMHA Construction Manager, served as Designer of the museum exhibits.

Louis Stokes played a pivotal role in the quest for civil rights, equality, social and economic justice throughout his 1969-1998 tenure in the United States Congress. He became the first African American member of Congress from the State of Ohio. Stokes was honored by Congress with The Congressional Distinguished Service Award in 2003.

Stokes, who holds 26 honorary doctorate degrees from colleges and universities, is an advocate for quality public housing around the country. He chaired a number of Congressional Committees including: the Appropriations Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, HUD and Independent Agencies; the House Select Committee on Assassinations, which investigated the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; the House Ethics Committee; and the House Intelligence Committee.

He earned his Doctor of Laws Degree from Cleveland Marshall Law School. Prior to serving in Congress, Stokes participated in three cases in the United States Supreme Court, which included arguing the landmark "stop and frisk" case of *Terry v. Ohio*.

Stokes is currently Senior Counsel at Squire, Sanders & Dempsey L.L.P., an international law firm. He is also a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University.

CMHA manages and operates the public housing program for Cuyahoga County in Ohio. It owns and manages property and administers rent subsidy programs to provide eligible low-income persons good, safe and affordable housing. CMHA also provides other services including: homeownership opportunities, employment training, resident employment opportunities and other programs for its residents. For more information on CMHA, visit www.cmha.net.