

The Honorable William Lacy Clay Sr.
U.S. Representative of Missouri (1969–2001)

The Long Struggle for Representation: Oral Histories of African Americans in Congress

Close Friends

Representative Clay Sr. discusses the close friendship he shared with Representatives Louis Stokes and Gus Hawkins.

Interview recorded September 10, 2019

Well, Stokes and I had a great friendship—lasted until, until he died. I mean, we only lived about 10 minutes apart here—not here, in the other house, which was 10 minutes from here. We were the ones that really pushed through the idea of starting the Congressional Black Caucus. And so I had a great relationship with everybody in the caucus, but with Stokes it was closer than, than anybody else. I had a good relationship with Charles Diggs, the chairman, and of course Gus Hawkins. Gus Hawkins was a champion. He was, he and I had the, had the, kind of friendship Lou Stokes and I had, and we were the ones that kept the organization together. You still had a lot of confusion in the organization, but they were all, we, we could always reach a happy medium.