

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

“Just Permanent Interests”

Representative Clay Sr. shares his ideas about the political agenda of the African American community.
Interview recorded September 10, 2019

Well, then I wrote the book *Just Permanent Interests*, incidentally which became the motto of the Congressional Black Caucus. In the speech I made early, early on, I said that Black people should have no permanent friends, no permanent enemies, just permanent interests, and that has become the motto of the Congressional Black Caucus. It still is. So, that was reference to some of our friends in the labor movement, the liberals, elderly civil rights leaders, that we don't need in-between middle people to be our spokesperson. We will speak for ourselves, and that was the mandate and the manifesto of the Congressional Black Caucus.