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Martin Luther King, Jr.

By JAMES W. WADE III

Staff Reporter

Veterans Day brought a special honor for a local veteran, retired U.S. Congressman Louis Stokes, who had a portrait unveiled in the VA Administration building at 10701 East Blvd. This special honor was to recognize his strong commitment to public service and particularly our

nation's veterans.

The American Legion of Ohio donated the funds for the artwork. The portrait took nine months to complete. Robert Hartsborn, portrait artist said, "It has been an honor to capture Congressman Louis Stokes on canvas. He has a very kind and natural consideration about him -- the portrait basically painted itself."

Stokes was joined by his lovely wife Jay of 51 years and other family members. Various speakers included current congressional representative Marcia Fudge and Ohio U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown.

The audience included other dignitaries, as well as fellow armed forces vets. Stokes was born and educated in Cleveland. He served in the United States Army during the Second World War.

After the war, he was educated at the Western Reserve University and Cleveland Marshall Law School .

Stokes was elected to Congress and took his seat on Jan. 3, 1969. He served 15 consecutive terms, ranking 11th overall in House seniority. During his tenure in Congress, Louis Stokes chaired several important committees, including most notable, the House Select Committee on Assassinations, Official Conduct and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

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When Congressman Stokes retired, he became the first African American in the history of the U.S. Congress to retire having completed 30 years in office. Following his service in Congress, he became senior counsel at Squire, Sanders & Dempsey L.L. P., a global law firm and

Distinguished Visiting Professor at the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, Case Western Reserve University.

On April 19, 199, the Cleveland Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center was officially renamed the Louis Stokes Cleveland Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center to honor Congressman Stokes

Congressman Stokes in his remarks expressed his appreciation for this honor and thanked everyone.