

Carl B. Stokes, first major city black mayor, 68

CLEVELAND — Carl B. Stokes was praised yesterday as a pioneer whose election as mayor 29 years was a political watershed for minorities.

He "was a lifelong role model, not only for African-Americans, but for all citizens who share his abiding concern for his fellow man," Gov. George Voinovich said.

The two-term Cleveland mayor, first elected in 1967, died yesterday at age 68 at Cleveland Clinic. He had cancer of the esophagus.

Mr. Stokes, appointed ambassador to the Seychelles Islands in 1994 by President Clinton, took a medical leave of absence from that post in the Indian Ocean last June after his cancer was diagnosed.

Clinton said Mr. Stokes was a friend and valued colleague who "brought energy and humor to every task he undertook."

Mr. Stokes first ran for mayor as an independent in 1965, narrowly losing to Mayor Ralph Locher, a Democrat who was criticized after his police chief made racially insensitive comments. Two years later, Mr. Stokes defeated Locher in the Democratic primary. The great-grandson of a slave went on to defeat Republican Seth Taft, the grandson of a president, to become mayor.

He won 50.5 percent of the vote in a city that was 37 percent black. Today, blacks constitute the majority in the city of 506,000.

Voinovich, himself a former Cleveland mayor, said Mr. Stokes' becoming the first black elected mayor of a major U.S. city served as a crucial turning point for minorities in America.

"His election helped knock down barriers to higher office for African-Americans throughout the nation," Voinovich said.

"As mayor, Stokes inspired 14-year-old Mike White's dream of becoming the mayor of Cleveland," said current mayor Michael R. White, a black serving his second term.

Mr. Stokes "inspired black Americans to aspire to higher political office all over the country," said his older brother, 14-term U.S. Rep. Louis Stokes.

"I have lost a brother and the nation has lost one of its most famous sons," Louis Stokes said. "My brother utilized his brilliant mind and intellect to challenge this nation's political system."

As mayor, Mr. Stokes emphasized jobs and housing, and said a crisis facing U.S. cities threatened "to strangle and destroy our entire urban civilization. We must mobilize our brainpower, our talents and our human resources without delay."

In his autobiography "Promises of Power," Mr. Stokes said his early attempts as mayor to build a community consensus were severely damaged the night of July 23, 1968, when a

shootout between a group of black men and police ended in the deaths of six black civilians and three white police officers.

"The aftermath of that night was to haunt and color every aspect of my administration the next three years," Mr. Stokes wrote.

His second two-year term was marked by attempts to expand public housing and shake up the police department. He did not seek a third term. In 1972 he worked as an anchorman for WNBC-TV in New York City.

Mr. Stokes, who grew up in the city's first federally financed housing complex for the poor, also was the first black Democrat elected to the Ohio House of Representatives, in 1962, and later a city judge.

In later years, Mr. Stokes and his brother would show visitors to Cleveland the housing project and explain that when they were youngsters they didn't know they were poor. Their father died when they were young and their mother worked as a cleaning woman.

At City Hall, Mr. Stokes' portrait was moved to the marble rotunda on yesterday and draped in black, with police officers as an honor guard. White ordered flags in the city to be flown at half-staff.

Funeral arrangements were pending.

—AP

Councillor Sullivan

21.

/All

WHEREAS: This City Council was deeply saddened at learning of the death of

Carl B. Stokes on April 3, 1996 at the
and age of sixty-eight years after a lengthy illness, and,

WHEREAS: Carl first ran for Mayor of Cleveland in 1965 but was defeated, he ran again in 1967 and was victorious making him the first major city Black Mayor. A position he held for two terms, and

WHEREAS: In his position as Mayor Carl emphasized jobs, expanding public housing, and shaking up the police department, and

WHEREAS: Carl's attempts to build a community consensus was impaired by a shootout between a group of black men and police which resulted in the death of six black civilians and three white police officers, and,

WHEREAS: Carl's passing will leave a void in the lives of all of his/her surviving friends and family, _____

WHEREAS Carl grew up in Cleveland's first Federally Funded public housing complex, was the first black Democrat elected to the Ohio House of Representatives in 1962 and was later a city judge, in 1972 he was an anchor man for WNBC-TV in New York City, in 1994 he was appointed by President Clinton as Ambassador to the Seychelles Islands, and

WHEREAS: Carl will be sorely missed by all he/she touched and loved; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That this City Council go on record extending its deepest sympathy to the family of Carl B. Stokes at this time of such personal loss; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the City Clerk be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to the Stokes family on behalf of Ambassador to the Seychelles Islands, and

4/4

9:15

Sullivan

Globe

Mary McKenna

Globe

Coffee

ms

Herald

Mayor Karl Stokes,



City of Cambridge

21.

IN CITY COUNCIL

April 8, 1996

COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN
VICE MAYOR BORN
COUNCILLOR DAVIS
COUNCILLOR DUEHAY
COUNCILLOR GALLUCCIO
COUNCILLOR REEVES
MAYOR RUSSELL
COUNCILLOR TOOMEY
COUNCILLOR TRIANTAFILLOU

WHEREAS: This City Council was deeply saddened at learning of the death of **Carl B. Stokes** on April 3, 1996 at the age of sixty-eight years after a lengthy illness; and

WHEREAS: Mr. Stokes first ran for Mayor of Cleveland in 1965 but was defeated, he ran again in 1967 and was victorious, making him the first Black mayor of a major city, a position he held for two terms; and

WHEREAS: In his position as Mayor, Mr. Stokes emphasized jobs, expanding public housing and shaking up the police department; and

WHEREAS: Mr. Stokes was a lifelong role model, not only for African-Americans, but for all citizens who shared his abiding concern for his fellow man; and

WHEREAS: Mr. Stokes grew up in Cleveland's first federally funded public housing complex, was the first Black democrat elected to the Ohio House of Representatives in 1962 and was later a City Judge; and

WHEREAS: In 1972, he was an anchorman for WNBC-TV in New York City, in 1994 he was appointed by President Clinton as Ambassador to the Seychelles Island; and

WHEREAS: Mr. Stokes' passing will leave a void in the lives of all of his friends and family; and

WHEREAS: **Carl B. Stokes** will be sorely missed by all he touched and loved; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That this City Council go on record extending its deepest sympathy to the family of **Carl B. Stokes** at this time of such personal loss; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the City Clerk be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to the Stokes family on behalf of the entire City Council.

In City Council April 8, 1996

Adopted by the affirmative vote of nine members.

Attest:- D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

D. Margaret Drury

D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk



City of Cambridge

21.

IN CITY COUNCIL

April 8, 1996

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COUNCILLOR DAVIS
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Entire membership, R-355
Consent Order #21

Councillor Sullivan re: Resolution
on the death of Carl B. Stokes, late
Mayor of Cleveland, Ohio and the first
African-American Mayor of a major City.

In City Council April 8, 1996

Order Adopted