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National Museum of African American History and Culture

Delegate Magazine 1972

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WELCOME TO THE CITY OF DETROIT

[[image - black and white photograph of John Conyers, Jr.]]
[[caption]] CONGRESSMAN JOHN CONYERS, JR. First Dist., Michigan
[[/caption]]

Detroit Democrat. Elected in 1970 to fourth term in U.S. House of Representatives with 88% of the vote.

At the beginning of the 92nd Congress, opposed then Majority Leader Carl Albert for the post of Speaker of the House because Albert refused to take a position on the Mississippi Challenge. This challenge, led by Conyers, was an effort in the House Democratic Caucus to strip the seniority from the five Mississippi Congressmen on the grounds that they were not Democrats but rather members of a racially exclusionary state party which is not recognized by the Democratic National Committee. The challenge failed 111-55.

Sponsor of Full Opportunity Act which would provide \$30 billion yearly for a ten year period to aid low income Americans in the areas of jobs, housing and education. Bill also includes strong anti-discrimination and enforcement provisions.

Sponsor of Martin Luther King Holiday Bill which would make January 15, King's birthday, a national holiday. Co-sponsor of Adequate Income Act, an income maintenance proposal providing \$6,500 a year to a family of four.

Authored only amendment passed by the House which strengthened the Fair Housing section of the 1966 Civil Rights Bill. Organized three fact finding missions by Congressmen to Alabama and Mississippi to investigate violations of civil and voting rights. Toured Vietnam in Spring 1969 investigating religious and political freedoms as part of U.S. Study Team.

Member of House Judiciary Committee and Government Operations Committee.

Vice Chairman of National Board, Americans for Democratic Action; Vice-Chairman of Advisory Council, American Civil Liberties Union; and Member of Congress for Peace Through Law. In 1967 received Rosa Parks Award for Civil Rights Activities from the Southern Christian Leadership Congress.

As a member of Congress has campaigned for candidates throughout the country and has spoken in Boston, New York, Cleveland, Chicago, Gary, Seattle, Los Angeles, Memphis, New Orleans, Jackson, Miami, Savannah and Charlottesville.

Author of "Politics and the Black Revolution." Ebony, August 1969: and "To Change the Course of History," in Many Shades of Black, Wormley and Fenderson, 1969.

Legislative Activities

Sponsored or co-sponsored the following bills which have been passed into law: Medicare, Immigration Reform, Cold War G.I. Bill, Truth-in-Packaging, 18 Year Old Vote, Election of D.C. School Board, Law Enforcement Assistance Act.

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CHARLES C. DIGGS, JR.
Member of Congress

Michigan's first Black member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Congressman Charles C. Diggs, Jr., was born in Detroit on December 2, 1922, the only child of Charles, Sr., and Maynard Diggs. His late father was a pioneering businessman and politician.

Following his graduation from Detroit's Minor High School in 1940, Congressman Diggs attended the University of Michigan and Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee. His higher education was interrupted in 1942 for military service in World War II, in which he served as an officer in the Army Air Corps. In 1945 he graduated from Wayne State University, Detroit, and became a licensed physician. He is President of the House of Diggs, Inc., a fifty-year old mercantile corporation which also has interests in four establishments in Detroit and suburbs. He also holds honorary doctorate degrees from Central State College and Wayne State University in Ohio.

Prior to election to the House of Representatives in 1968, Congressman Diggs held office for two terms as the youngest member of the Michigan State Senate. His political career is widely credited for furthering the efforts of Detroit's Black voting public.

He is now serving his fourth term as Representative from the 12th District of Michigan and has established a reputation for solving the problems of the underprivileged and other citizens whose difficulties might otherwise go unnoticed. He is constantly addressing local community groups and is frequently requested to speak in other parts of the country, particularly in the South and Northeast areas.

Because of his investigations which prompted President Kennedy to reauthorize the Committee on Equal Opportunity in the Armed Services, Congressman Diggs' activities in problems relating to military service is sought by Black associations all over the world. He also has secured the appointment of small business entrepreneurs, having convened in 1961 the first national conference to coordinate the problems of developing minority entrepreneurs and having concentrated on financial assistance for the development of such business in his constituent service program. His work in this line brought into existence Detroit's Inner City Business Improvement Forum, Inc., which is creating national attention for its success in assistance and development of Black businesses.

An early advocate of U.S. reorganization from direct military intervention in Indochina, Congressman Diggs is a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Chairman of its Subcommittee on Africa. He has traveled more extensively to various African nations on official missions than any other Member of Congress. He is also a ranking member of the House Committee on the District of Columbia, which has jurisdiction over the Nation's Capital. He is Chair of the Michigan Democratic Delegation, Founder and Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, and Vice-Chairman of the Democratic Party's National Committee, with jurisdiction over the Minutes Division.

In the 90th Congress, 1967-1968, sponsored the following bills: Home Rule for the District of Columbia, Comprehensive Minimum Wage, Repeal 14(b) of NLRA, Jobs-in-Housing Act, Abolish Death Penalty, Amend National School Lunch Act, Jury Discrimination Act.

In 91st Congress, 1969-1970, sponsored or co-sponsored the following bills: Department of Peace Act, Tax Reform, Occupational Health and Safety Act, Increased Housing Appropriations, Repeal Title II of Internal Security Act, Department of Youth Affairs, Volunteer Army, National Living Income Program Act, Newsmen's Privilege Act, Handgun Control Act, National Health Insurance, Election Days as Legal Holiday, Family Nutrition Act, Amend Voting Rights Act.

Community Activities

Before election to Congress served as Director of Education, Local 900, UAW. Executive Board Member, Detroit Branch, NAACP and Wolverine Bar Association. Advisory Council Member, Michigan Civil Liberties Union. Former General Counsel, Detroit Trade Union Leadership Council.

Presently a member or sponsor of over 50 organizations including Joint Action in Community Service, Medical Committee for Human Rights, Join Hands, Multi-Culture Institute, Southern Elections Fund, Young Adults for Progress, Council on Foreign Relations. Board of Trustees, Martin Luther King Memorial Center.

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Prior to election to the House of Representatives in 1954, Congressman Diggs held office for two terms as the youngest member of the Michigan State Senate. His successful political example is widely credited for further inspiring the efforts of Detroit's Black voting public.

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Congressman Diggs' assistance in problems relating to military service is sought by Black servicemen all over the world. He also has earned the appreciation of small business entrepreneurs, having convened in 1961 the first national conference to comprehensively discuss the problems of struggling minority enterprises and having concentrated on financial assistance for the development of such business in his constituent service program. His work in this line brought into existence Detroit's Inner City Business Improvement Forum, Inc., which is drawing national attention for its successes in assistance and development of Black businesses.

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