August 20, 2015

Howard University Community,

On Tuesday evening, Howard University lost an ardent supporter with the passing of Congressman Louis Stokes. He was a staunch advocate for equal opportunity, education, and justice and a great friend and champion for Howard. He was 90 years old.

A native of Cleveland, Ohio, Congressman Stokes was not only a fighter for the people of his home state, he was a military veteran, teacher, lawyer, politician, highly regarded and respected civic leader. Throughout his adult life, Louis Stokes worked to support the underserved in communities across the country; including in our nation’s capital.

Recognizing Howard’s need to expand its campus library system and research offerings within the health sciences and law schools, Congressman Stokes stepped in to assist University administration in securing $20 million in federal funding to build what is now the Louis Stokes Health Sciences Library and the Howard University Law Library. The libraries and resources they provide are testaments of Congressman Stokes’ commitment to serving and providing opportunities for others, where they are needed most.

During his 30-year tenure in Congress, Representative Stokes authored the Research Centers in Minority Institutions Act to strengthen the research capability of African-American health. As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, he led initiatives that secured and increased funding for research, treatment, and prevention of cancer, diabetes, heart disease, asthma, and AIDS, diseases that affect minority populations at disproportionate rates. Congressman Stokes developed the Minority Biomedical Research Support program and the Minority Access to Research Careers program, both designed to increase the number of minority scientists. He also served as chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus. His leadership in Congress and our nation will have a profound positive impact for generations to come.

On behalf of everyone at Howard who has been touched by his leadership, advocacy, and support, we are eternally grateful to Congressman Stokes. The Howard University family extends heartfelt condolences to the Stokes family. Our nation has lost a great champion. However, his kindness and generosity will live in our hearts forever.

In Truth and Service,

Wayne A. I. Frederick, M.D., MBA
President