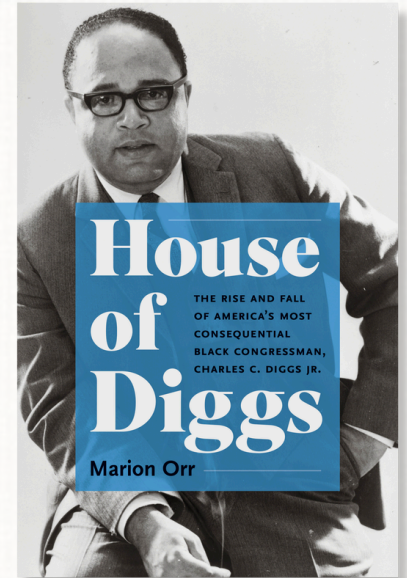


House of Diggs

THE RISE AND FALL OF AMERICA'S MOST CONSEQUENTIAL BLACK CONGRESSMAN, CHARLES C. DIGGS JR.

At the height of the civil rights movement, Charles C. Diggs Jr. (1922–1998) was the consummate power broker. In a political career spanning 1951 to 1980, Diggs, Michigan's first Black member of Congress, was the only federal official to attend the trial of Emmett Till's killers, worked behind the scenes with Martin Luther King Jr., and founded the Congressional Black Caucus. He was also the chief architect of legislation that restored home rule to Washington, DC, and almost single-handedly ignited the American anti-apartheid movement in the 1960s. Drawing on extensive archival research, including Diggs's rarely seen personal papers, FBI documents, and original interviews with family members and political associates, political scientist Marion Orr reveals that Diggs practiced a politics of strategic moderation. Orr argues that this quiet approach was more effective than the militant race politics practiced by Adam Clayton Powell and more appealing than the conservative Chicago-style approach of William Dawson—two of Diggs's better-known Black contemporaries.

Vividly written and deeply researched, *House of Diggs* is the first biography of Congressman Charles C. Diggs Jr., one of the most consequential Black federal legislators in US history. Congressman Diggs was a legislative lion whose unfortunate downfall punctuated his distinguished career and pushed him and his historic accomplishments out of sight. Now, for the first time, *House of Diggs* restores him to his much-deserved place in the history of American politics.



Praise for *House of Diggs*

"The definitive biography of the civil rights legislator we never should have forgotten. This book will change our collective understanding of Charles C. Diggs, Jr., the civil rights era, and the political battles we're still fighting today." – **Van Jones, CNN Host and NYT Bestselling Author**

"Engaging, essential, and meticulously researched. Marion Orr reveals Rep. Charles C. Diggs, Jr.'s pivotal role in the Civil Rights movement, at a time when 'Black politics shifted from protest to elections.' *House of Diggs* details how Congressman Diggs's dogged persistence and a strategically moderate approach to building coalitions changed the landscape of segregated America." – **Tamara Payne, Pulitzer Prize-winning co-author of *The Dead Are Arising: The Life of Malcolm X***

"An impressive and important book about an overlooked figure in the fight for civil rights. Marion Orr tells the story of Charles C. Diggs Jr. with deep insight, diligent research, and crisp writing." – **Jonathan Eig, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *King: A Life***

"This wonderfully readable biography rewrites the history of Black urban politics and civil rights through one of its most compelling and flawed characters." – **Thomas J. Sugrue, author of *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North***

"A skillfully rendered, scrupulously researched, and highly readable portrait of an important Civil Rights leader, long overdue for recognition." – **James McGrath Morris, author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Eye on the Struggle: Ethel Payne, the First Lady of the Black Press***



Marion Orr is a political scientist and the inaugural Frederick Lippitt Professor of Public Policy at Brown University. An award-winning author, his publications include *Black Social Capital: The Politics of School Reform in Baltimore* and *The Color of School Reform: Race, Politics, and the Challenge of Urban Education*. He was awarded the Biographers International Organization's Francis "Frank" Rollin Fellowship for his work on Congressman Diggs.

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