

Stanley Nowak was born on March 14, 1903 in Poland. He came to Detroit in 1932. An early UAW organizer, he helped organize major automobile shops on Detroit's west side. He served in the Michigan State Senate for ten years, from 1939 to 1949. He was editor of the Polish weekly, Glos Ludowy (Voice of the Workers), for over twenty years. His wife, Margaret, has worked closely with him. They are parents of Lisa Nowak and have two grandchildren.

When I went to the Senate in 1939 the only black person in the entire legislature was Charles Diggs. And we became very friendly. The problem was that he could not stay at any hotel in Lansing. He could not eat in a restaurant.

There was a hotel there called the Roosevelt. Margaret and I lived in that hotel. So I invited Charles Diggs to come and have dinner with me. We sat at the table and exchanged the usual "Hello, how are you?"

The waiter came in very quietly and said, "Senator, I have a call for you." That was nothing unusual. I went to the lobby. Then he said, "There is no call, but I have to tell you that we cannot serve your friend. We don't serve black people.

I said, "If I am staying at your hotel and I cannot invite my colleague from the Senate to have dinner with me, then I'm going to walk out and move out of your hotel. If you don't want me to do that, I'll go back to that room full of people and tell them exactly what you're doing."