

NEW YORK CITY

COMMISSION ON
HUMAN RIGHTSMAYOR
MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG

CCHR NEWSLETTER

COMMISSIONER
PATRICIA L. GATLING

'UNITY FROM DIVERSITY' Commission Features Dr. Putnam

In April 2008, NYC Human Rights Commissioner/Chair Patricia L. Gatling led a discussion entitled "*E Pluribus Unum: Reconciling Diversity and Community in the 21st Century*" at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem. The event was the Commission's third in a series of Civil Rights Public Lectures and featured Dr. Robert D. Putnam, best-selling author of *Bowling Alone*, the Peter and Isabel Malkin Professor of Public Policy at Harvard University, and Visiting Professor and Director of the Manchester Graduate Summer Program in Social Change, University of Manchester (UK).

Dr. Putnam described how changing populations and ethnic diversity continually shape trust, identities, social ties and civic engagement. He said that while "increased immigration is a strong engine of economic growth and injects creativity and energy into receiving countries and communities, in the short-term, our discomfort with diversity challenges our community bonds and cohesion. But America's history and motto '*E Pluribus Unum*' shows that we can build a unity from this diversity. And with concerted attention of the sort that the NYC Human Rights Commission and others devote to these problems, we can accelerate our ability to find common ground between various communities and forge a wider, more inclusive American society."

Also participating were Dr. Katherine Newman, Professor of Sociology and Public Affairs at Princeton University; Rev. C. Vernon Mason, CEO of the Fund for Community

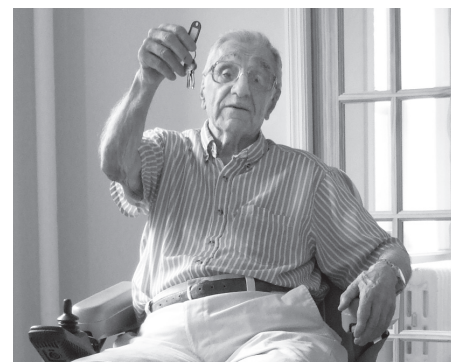


Leadership Development and CEO of Uth Turn; Richard E. Green, Chief Executive/President of the Crown Heights Youth Collective, Inc; Chung-Wah Hong, Executive Director of the New York Immigration Coalition; and Rabbi Robert Kaplan, Director of CAUSE-NY, Jewish Community Relations Council.

Photo, left: Dr. Robert D. Putnam, keynote speaker. Below, from left to right: Richard E. Green, Rabbi Robert Kaplan, Dr. Robert D. Putnam, Commissioner Patricia L. Gatling, Rev. C. Vernon Mason, Chung-Wah Hong, and Dr. Katherine S. Newman.



CCHR Hits Homerun for Disabled Vet



Albert Kaidy, above, with keys to his new apartment.

The Commission's Law Enforcement Bureau successfully resolved a complaint from an elderly disabled veteran whose Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, apartment building was inaccessible to wheelchair users. The respondents who own several buildings in the area agreed to move the complainant, Albert Kaidy, to an accessible building across the street, provide him with a larger refurbished accessible apartment, pay all costs associated with the move, and freeze his rent for the rest of his life. The estimated settlement value is in excess of \$40,000. CCHR staff attorney Olivia M. Cuggy handled the case, with assistance from Dick Connette. Individuals with disabilities are protected from discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations under the NYC Human Rights Law.

CCHR Issues Report Card on Ad Agencies

The Commission issued its first summary report in April 2008 on whether 16 of the City's largest advertising agencies have met the 2007 hiring goals to diversify their upper ranks. The report reveals that most of the agencies that signed the groundbreaking agreements in September 2006, either met or exceeded their own goals. (continued on p.4)



MOVING FORWARD Commissioner's Message

Our commitment to promoting and protecting the civil rights of all those who live in, work in, and visit this City is what makes the Commission the force it is today. By vigorously enforcing the Human Rights Law and fostering mutual understanding and respect among the City's diverse communities, we have brought justice to thousands of individuals and have educated many more about the Human Rights Law.

This commitment is as strong as the day we started in 2002.

In April, our Civil Rights Public Lecture Series featured Public Policy Professor at Harvard University and best-selling author of *Bowling Alone*, Dr. Robert D. Putnam. These public forums give us an opportunity to exchange ideas and better understand the positive impact of ethnic diversity on our communities. Dr. Putnam's research and optimism into creating peaceful societies in a diverse multi-ethnic country is reassuring and the Commission was proud to recognize his unique analysis of American communities.

Our Law Enforcement Bureau has handled additional calls and appointments with the recent amendment to the City's Human Right Law that protects individuals from housing discrimination based upon their source of income. We have been able to successfully resolve approximately 14% of these inquiries through pre-complaint intervention, a process that encourages a speedy resolution without filing a formal complaint, avoiding costly and lengthy litigation. To date, we have resolved 20% of the cases where complaints have been filed.

We have also begun laying the groundwork for the first-ever NYC Civil Rights Museum by preserving the stories of individuals who were engaged in the fight

for civil rights and whose influence has been felt throughout the nation. Through our Oral History Documentation Project, we have begun filming their stories in their own words to vividly teach New Yorkers and visitors about NYC's vital role in the larger Civil Rights Movement.

With a renewed grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Office for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices, our Immigrant Employment Rights Program will continue to educate employers and employees about the responsibilities and protections they have under both federal anti-discrimination laws and the City Human Rights Law.

We also continue our proactive testing in employment and housing to locate systemic violations of the Law.

These are just a few brief highlights of our many activities.

I am grateful to Mayor Bloomberg for the opportunity to serve as Commissioner, advocating Human Rights on behalf of all the people of this City and its visitors.

Patricia L. Gatling

Grants Appointments Honors

Commissioner Honored

In February 2008, the New York County Lawyers' Association (NYCLA) and the Metropolitan Black Bar Association (MBBA) presented Commissioner Patricia L. Gatling with the sixth annual Ida B. Wells-Barnett Justice Award. The award is named in honor of Ida Wells-Barnett, an African-American civil rights activist. In a separate event, Commissioner Gatling delivered remarks and introduced Smith College professor and distinguished author of *Ida: A Sword Among Lions*, Paula

J. Giddings, at a discussion of her recent biography of Ida B. Wells. Additional organizations that recognized Commissioner Gatling's commitment to diversity and Civil Rights included: The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives at its 32nd Annual Training Conference and Exhibition; The College and Community Fellowship; and the Jackie Robison Center for Physical Culture. She was also a member of Harvard University's "Executive Session on Human Rights Commissions and Criminal Justice" Symposium;



Rick Kopstein, NYLU

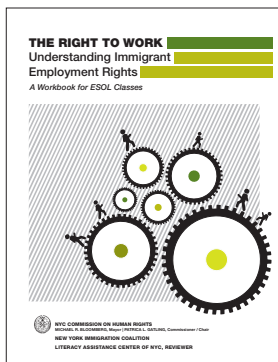


Top: Comm. Gatling receives the Ida B. Wells-Barnett Justice Award. l-r: Renaye Brown Cuyler, program Chair; Ms. Gatling; Catherine A. Christian, NYCLA President; and Xavier Donaldson, MBBA President. Left: Commissioner Gatling, left, with author Paula J. Giddings.

New ESOL Classes

CCHR's expanded Immigrant Employment Rights Program provides English language learners with vital information about immigrant employment rights through its two English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) curriculums. CCHR and its partner, the NY Immigration Coalition, have joined teachers of intermediate and advanced ESOL adult literacy classes to offer the courses through the City's three public library systems.

CCHR developed a workbook with two intermediate-level lessons and a DVD with examples. The first lesson, "Working in the United States," explains the employment I-9 Form, the required documents for verifying identity and work authorization, and how to recognize document abuse by an employer. The second lesson, "Discrimination in the Workplace," explains types of discrimination that a worker can experience based upon their national origin or citizenship status.



Civil Rights Film Project

The Commission is laying the groundwork for a new museum dedicated to preserving and presenting the history of the NYC Civil Rights Movement. The Commission has begun this journey with its Oral History Film Documentation Project to preserve the stories of notable individuals who steadily struggled for equality in the midst of tempestuous racial climates during the post-World War II period and whose major contributions paved the way for progress in the arts and entertainment, education, government, the public sector and business. The significance of their groundbreaking strides lies in the impact they've had upon NYC and the rest of the nation.

Beginning in late spring, Commission staff filmed interviews with: painted story quilt artist, professor and author Faith Ringgold; poet, author, and professor Sonia Sanchez; Secretary of the Army, attorney, businessman, presidential adviser and counsel, and former chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Clifford L. Alexander, Jr.; civil rights activist, and co-founder and managing editor of *Freedom Ways*, a political and cultural quarterly magazine, Esther Cooper-Jackson; economist who worked in philanthropy, foreign international development and diplomacy, university administrator and professor, corporate executive, and public servant Clifton R. Wharton, Jr.; professor and former civil rights attorney who heads an at-risk youth organization he founded, Rev. C. Vernon Mason.

Photos, right, top down: Faith Ringgold, Clifford L. Alexander, Jr., Sonia Sanchez.



Right: Isaac Parsee. Below, left to right: new staff attorneys Cassandra Hyppolite, Priyanka G. Menon, R. Keith Chapman.



and was a guest speaker at Franklin Pierce Law Center's 2nd Annual Advanced Topics in International Criminal Law and Justice Seminar 2008.

New Staff Attorneys

CCHR added 2 new attorneys and 1 supervising attorney to its staff in early 2008. They are: Supervising Attorney Cassandra Hyppolite (J.D., Albany Law School); Priyanka G. Menon (J.D., Seton Hall University School of Law); and R. Keith Chapman (J.D., Rutgers School of Law). They are assigned to the Commission's Law Enforcement Bureau.

DOJ Grant

The Commission received a public education grant renewal of \$75,000 for its proposal to

the US Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Office for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices. Only 11 of these grants were awarded nationwide. The Commission's partner in the grant activities (described on this page) is the NY Immigration Coalition.

Staff Recognized

Rockaway's Friends Honoring Friends recognized CCHR's Isaac Parsee in a June ceremony for his work in the community and the positive impact he has had on area residents. Mr. Parsee is the Director of the New York City Commission on Human Rights Mortgage and Pre-Purchase Counseling Program.

CCHR Issues Report Card on Ad Agencies (cont.)

(continued from p.1) As part of the historic agreements, they must establish minority recruitment goals for 3 years in the creative and managerial positions and report their results annually to the Commission.

Only 4 ad agencies fell short. Under the terms of their agreement with the Commission, they have hired outside assistance so they can meet their 2008 and 2009 minority hiring goals.

The agencies are: Arnold Worldwide; Avrett, Free & Ginsberg; BBDO; DDB; Draft New York; Euro RSCG Worldwide; FCB New York; Gotham, Inc.; Grey Direct; Grey Interactive; Kaplan Thaler Group, LTD.; Merkley and Partners; Ogilvy and Mather; PHD USA; Saatchi and Saatchi; and Young and Rubicam. Draft Inc. and FCB Worldwide have merged into one agency, Draft FCB.

Immigration-Related Employment Discrimination

In June, the Commission co-hosted two forums on avoiding immigration-related employment discrimination. The first program chaired by Human Rights Commissioner Patricia L. Gatling and NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) Commissioner Martha K. Hirst provided City agency EEO and personnel officers with special training on new immigrants in NYC and the City's responsibilities as its largest employer. The program included Commissioner Guillermo Linares of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, DCAS Deputy Commissioner Diane Crothers, Deputy Director



Robin M. Stutman, Esq., left, with Commissioner Patricia L. Gatling.

of the City Planning's Population Division Peter Lobo, and keynote speaker Robin M. Stutman, Special Litigation Counsel in the Office of Special Counsel for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices, in the U.S. Department of Justice.

Commissioner Gatling and The NY Immigration Coalition Executive Director Chung-Wha Hong co-hosted the second forum for employers and business representatives. Joining them was NYC Councilmember John Liu from Queens. The Queens Library's Director of the Adult Learner Program, Susan Dalmas, hosted

the event. Robin M. Stutman, Esq., the keynote speaker, discussed anti-discrimination provisions of the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) and employer sanctions of Immigration and Reform Control Act of 1986 (IRCA).

Both events were part of an ongoing collaborative effort to educate immigrant workers, employers, and advocacy groups regarding the protections and obligations they have under IRCA and the NYC Human Rights Law. The Immigrant Employment Rights Program provides workshops, ESOL classes, literature, and multilingual presentations regarding discrimination in employment based on national origin, citizenship status or alienage. Funding assistance for the program is provided by the U.S. Department of Justice.

Legislative Highlights

Commissioner Gatling testified before the City Council's Civil Rights Committee on March 7, 2008, updating them on the Commission's work, its budget, and its historic diversity agreements with the City's major ad firms.

On March 26, 2008, the Administrative Code of the City of New York was amended making "lawful source of income" a protected class (Local Law 10/2008). It protects people from housing discrimination based upon their source of income, including government assistance.

THE LAW

The New York City Human Rights Law is one of the most comprehensive civil rights laws in the nation. The Law prohibits discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations based on race, color, creed, age, national origin, alienage or citizenship status, gender (including gender identity and sexual harassment), sexual orientation, disability, marital status, or partnership status. In addition, the Law affords protection against discrimination in employment based on arrest or conviction record and status as a victim of domestic violence, stalking and sex offenses. In housing, the Law affords additional protections based on lawful occupation, family status, and any lawful source of income. The City Human Rights Law also prohibits retaliation and bias-related harassment.

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