

'Fighting for Justice' Launched at the Apollo Theater

NYC Human Rights Commissioner/Chair Patricia L. Gatling, NYC Media Acting President Katherine Oliver, and Apollo Theater Foundation President Jonelle Procope co-hosted *Fighting For Justice: New York Voices of the Civil Rights Movement*, on January 14, 2010. The preview screening and panel discussion filled the legendary Apollo Theater in Harlem. The event celebrated Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and included a special performance by the C3 Youth Choir from the Christian Cultural Center (Rev. A. R. Bernard, Pastor). Commissioner Gatling also announced the Commission's new online Civil Rights Museum at the Apollo event, which can be accessed through the Commission's website at www.nyc.gov/fightingforjustice.

The half-hour film, *Fighting for Justice*, highlights the efforts of two New Yorkers, Esther Cooper Jackson and Clifford L. Alexander, Jr., whose contributions towards equality and own personal stories illustrate New York City's prominent place in the national Civil Rights Movement.

The evening's panelists included: Keith Brown, Moderator – Senior Vice President of News and Public Affairs, BET Networks; Esther Cooper Jackson – Civil Rights activist and managing editor of the quarterly magazine *Freedomways*; Clifford L. Alexander, Jr. – attorney, businessman, and counsel to President Lyndon B. Johnson during passage of Civil Rights legislation; Dr. Clarence Taylor – Professor of History, Baruch College and the Graduate Center, CUNY and Professor of the Black and Hispanic Studies Department; Dr. Martha Biondi – Associate Professor of African American Studies and History, Northwestern University; and Shola Lynch – Filmmaker: director and producer.

Commissioner Gatling also recognized the work of Elsie Richardson, whose short film appears on the Commission's online Civil Rights Museum along with Mrs. Jackson's and Mr. Alexander's. Mrs. Richardson publicly challenged Senator Robert Kennedy to

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Left Photo: *Fighting for Justice* panelists (left to right) Dr. Clarence Taylor, Clifford L. Alexander, Jr., Esther Cooper Jackson, Dr. Martha Biondi, and Shola Lynch. Below left: NYC Human Rights Commissioner/Chair Patricia L. Gatling. Below: Clifford L. Alexander, Jr. and Esther Cooper Jackson, subjects of the film *Fighting for Justice*. PHOTOS: Richard Lee



New Jamaica Office



Human Rights Specialists Robert Tilly (left) and JoAnn Darcy (right) meet with Adneri Ponce (center), deputy director of the New York City Commission on Human Rights Queens Community Service Center, located in Jamaica.

The Commission's Queens Community Service Center relocated its Flushing office to 153-01 Jamaica Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, Queens. The new location better fulfills Federal Community Development Block Grant requirements, serving a higher percentage of low to moderate income residents. Additionally, the Jamaica office is fully accessible to individuals with disabilities. The office is open weekdays from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Human Rights Specialists are on hand to assist with discrimination complaints and information about the community-based services the Commission provides. The office is under the leadership of Katie Bracken, director, and Adneri Ponce, deputy director.

CCHR Fines Landlord

In December 2009, the Commission ordered a Brooklyn housing provider to pay a \$50,000 fine to the City and \$30,000 in compensatory damages to an elderly, disabled tenant after denying her permission to replace the tub with a shower at no cost to the building owner. The owner was also ordered to install a walk-in shower for the tenant at his own expense. The tenant, who has resided in her apartment for 42 years, requested the shower after it became increasingly difficult to get in and out of her bathtub. Commission staff attorney Keith Chapman brought the case to trial.



MOVING FORWARD Commissioner's Message

We recently created an online Civil Rights Museum (www.nyc.gov/fightingforjustice) with three short films we co-produced with NYC Media, as part of our educational efforts. The films, *Fighting for Justice: New York Voices of the Civil Rights Movement*, highlight the work of Esther Cooper Jackson, Clifford L. Alexander, Jr., and Elsie Richardson, whose contributions helped pave the way toward progress for equal justice for African-Americans, and whose stories begin to tell about New York

City's formative place in the national Civil Rights Movement. Through films and other related materials, the website will illustrate that New York City was the hub of a struggle to achieve equality and justice that so many other movements have looked to for strategy and strength.

In mid-January 2010, along with our partners NYC Media, and in collaboration with the Apollo Theater Education Program, we presented a screening of the *Fighting for Justice* film at the Apollo Theater followed by a panel discussion, in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The website, films, and Apollo Theater event stem from a project we launched two years ago when we began filming interviews with some of New York City's living legends. So far, we have interviewed 16 notable individuals and plan on more interviews, making them available on our website.

Let me share a few of our other recent highlights.

December 2009 marked the end of the Commission's 3-year agreements with 15 NYC advertising agencies. We are analyzing current demographics to determine the impact of the agreements.

Since reorganizing our Law Enforcement Bureau, our case closures have increased by

36% in 2009. Also in 2009, settlements rose 10%, the number of cases we referred to the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings has increased, and the number of pending cases has decreased by 29%.

Under our employment discrimination testing program, we have collected nearly \$200,000 in fines from employers since launching the program three years ago.

Housing discriminations complaints rose due to a 2008 amendment to our law, our increased educational efforts, and aggressive enforcement of the law. We have obtained apartments for 88 complainants who were initially denied housing because of their lawful source of income.

On the next page, please read about some of the community programs we provide.

I am proud to serve as this City's Human Rights Commissioner, enforcing one of the strongest civil rights laws in the nation and protecting New Yorkers and its visitors from discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations based on a wide variety of protected classes.

Patricia L. Gatling

Grants/Honors Appointments

Commissioner Honored

The Caribbean American Chamber of Commerce and Industry honored Commissioner Patricia L. Gatling as part of its "Salute to Minority and Women Business Achievers" in March 2010.



Jack and Jill of America 12/09 event keynote speaker Commissioner Gatling (center), Maria Hurley, Brooklyn Chapter Teen President (left), and Antoinette Brown (right), Brooklyn Chapter President.

Commissioner Gatling has also lectured at various civil rights events around the world. Among them are: National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, NYC, January 2010; Jack and Jill of America, NYC, December 2009; Middle East and Asia-Pacific Conference, Dubai, November 2009; National Black Crown Prosecution Association, London, October 2009; Business and Professional Women International Long Island and NYC, September 2009 and March 2010; SUNY Queens Educational Opportunity Center Graduation, June 2009; Corporate Counsel Women of Color, South Africa, May 2009.

Commissioners Appointed

In March 2009, Mayor Bloomberg appointed William Hibsher, Esq. and Renee Lobo to the Commission.

William Hibsher is a Litigation Partner at Bryan Cave, LLP in NYC. Previously,



William Hibsher (right),
Renee Lobo (far right)

he was a partner at Teitelbaum, Hiller, Rodman, Paden & Hibsher, P.C., and also served as an Asst. US Attorney, Southern District of NY, heading the Civil Rights Unit. He is VP of the Board of Directors for Public Health Solutions; he serves on the Board of Directors for Congregation Beth Simchat Torah; and also served as co-chair of the board of Lambda Legal. Mr. Hibsher was also a Peace Corps volunteer. He has been the recipient of the Lambda Legal Liberty Award, the Hetrick-Martin Institute Emery Award, and the Lesbian

Community Programs

The Commission furthers its aggressive anti-discrimination efforts through the community programs it provides, reaching thousands of individuals annually. Its newly developed program, *Working for Real: Employment Rights and Discrimination in the Workplace*, provides anti-discrimination workshops throughout the City's many workforce development and other back-to-work agencies, emphasizing discrimination in employment, sexual harassment, and conflict resolution.

A new Commission program for the formerly incarcerated assists them to be successful in their reintegration into society. It is against the law to discriminate in employment against individuals who have arrest or conviction records.

CCHR's adult literacy curriculum *The Right to Work: Understanding Immigrant Employment Rights* provides English language learners with vital information about immigrant employment rights through ESOL classes. Student and teacher workbooks are available at www.nyc.gov and the US Dept. of Justice Civil Rights Division's website.

In 2009, CCHR's Equal Access Program successfully negotiated 212 modifications in employment, housing and public accommodations for those with disabilities. CCHR also provides fair housing workshops, mortgage counseling, and trainings.

and Gay Bar Association of NY Award. Mr. Hibsher received his JD from St. John's University School of Law, and his M.A. from Hofstra University.

Renee Lobo has been a producer, broadcast journalist, investigative reporter, and anchor for International Television for 15 years, serving the South Asian community. Ms. Lobo is also a community leader and activist assisting new immigrants for over 20 years. She serves on: the QDA Asian Advisory Council, CB 6, and 112th Precinct CC. She is also board director of CURE; Board member/Chair for the DV Unit, Center for Women of NY; Dir. of S. Asian Bone Marrow Association; Founder/Dir. of Eyes for Hope; community advisory board member of the Flushing Hospital and CCHAYA board member. Ms. Lobo received a B.A. in Broadcast Journalism from SUNY, an advanced Honors diploma

NYC Civil Rights Online Museum

The Commission's new Civil Rights Online Museum is available at www.nyc.gov/fightingforjustice. There, visitors will learn more about the work of Esther Cooper Jackson, Clifford L. Alexander, Jr., and Elsie Richardson, whose stories tell about New York City's formative place in the national Civil Rights movement through short films.

Esther Cooper Jackson deferred her doctorate in 1941 to become a Civil Rights activist. She was also managing editor and one of the founders of the political and cultural quarterly magazine *Freedomways*, and headed the Southern Negro Youth Congress.

Clifford L. Alexander, Jr., President of Alexander and Associates, is an attorney, businessman, and served under four US Presidents. He was counsel to President Lyndon B. Johnson during passage of Civil Rights legislation, headed EEOC, and was the first Black Secretary of the Army under President Jimmy Carter.

Elsie Richardson was a community organizer and activist in Bedford-Stuyvesant and led Senator Robert F. Kennedy on a local tour in 1966. Her efforts led to the formation of the first nonprofit community development corporation in the country – the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation. She also took part in the 1941 NYC bus boycotts, led by Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., years before the more famous bus boycotts in the South.

The website also includes related photographs, important links, advisory committee, and articles on NYC's crucial contribution to the national Civil Rights Movement.



from the London School of Journalism, and an advanced diploma in Italian Language and Culture from Perugia, Italy.

USDOJ Grant

The Commission and its partner The NY Immigration Coalition were awarded another grant in the amount of \$65,453 from the US Dept. of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Office of Special Counsel for Immigrant-Related Unfair Employment Practices to support CCHR's ESOL program *The Right to Work: Immigrant Employment Rights*.

Staff Recognition

CCHR Staff Attorney Olivia Cuggy (LL.B., University College, Galway, Ireland and LL.M.; Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law) was promoted to Supervising Attorney in January 2010. CCHR's Brooklyn Community Service Center Co-

Director, Derek Slaughter, was recognized by a Bushwick, Brooklyn school in March for the diversity training he conducted as part of "Respect for All" week, a citywide effort in the schools to reduce discrimination, and harassment.

Right: CCHR Supervising Staff Attorney Olivia Cuggy. Below: CCHR's Brooklyn Community Service Center Co-Director Derek Slaughter at P.S. 196.



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provide 'brick and mortar' and 'no more studies' of the area when he toured Bedford-Stuyvesant in 1966. Her actions led to the revitalization of the community.

Following the Apollo event, Commissioner Gatling, Clifford Alexander, and NYC Media COO Todd Asher rang the opening bell at the NY Stock Exchange Euronext.



Left: Clifford L. Alexander, Jr., center, NYC Media COO Todd Asher, left center, Commissioner Patricia L. Gatling, right, and the *Fighting for Justice* team ring the opening bell at the NYSE Euronext on January 15, 2010. PHOTO: Ray Girard, NYSE.

Below left: Apollo event moderator Keith Brown. Middle photo: C3 Youth Choir Director Kelvin King and lead singer Jahcee Smiley from the Christian Cultural Center in Brooklyn perform at the Apollo Theater. Below: Elsie Richardson. PHOTOS: Richard Lee



Immigration Employment Rights

In July 2009, the Commission and the NY Immigration Coalition joined with the Bucks Business Network to provide Staten Island employers with information on how to avoid immigration-related employment discrimination. Keynote speaker was Robin



(Left to Right) Tom Shea, Robin Stutman, Commissioner Gatling, Bucks Pres. Jeff Henick, CCHR Deputy Com./Gen. Counsel Cliff Mulqueen, and Bucks member George Fehling. PHOTO: Flint Furnari

Stutman, special litigation counsel in the Office of Special Counsel for Immigration Related Unfair Practices, Civil Rights Division, US Dept. of Justice. NYC Human Rights Commissioner Gatling, and Dir. of Training/Technical Assistance at The NY Immigration Coalition, Tom Shea, also spoke at the event.

Legislative Highlights

Commissioner Gatling testified before the NYC Council Committee on Civil Rights on March 16, 2009 regarding the Commission's budget and Deputy Commissioner Lee Hudson testified before the same committee on May 21, 2009 regarding the Commission's programs under its Community Relations Bureau.



Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott and CCHR Human Rights Specialist Annette Harewood celebrate Harlem Community Law Day 2010 held at the Harlem Community Justice Center.

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.

NEW YORK CITY COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

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