

News

Manhattan Borough President **C. Virginia Fields**

Municipal Building, 1 Centre Street, 19th Floor, New York, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 10, 1999

CONTACT: MICHAEL P. DeMARZO
(212) 669-8139

FIELDS, KOCH AND ELECTED LEADERS JOIN IN OUTRAGE AT THE SHOOTING DEATH OF AMADOU DIALL

Manhattan Borough President C. Virginia Fields was joined today by Former Mayor Edward I. Koch, State Senator David Paterson, City Council Members Guillermo Linares, Stanley Michels, Gifford Miller, and William Perkins in an expression of outrage and sadness at the shooting death of Amadou Diallo. The officials called on Mayor Giuliani and Police Commissioner Safir to change the culture of the N.Y.P.D. by setting a tone of equal respect for all communities in the city and by emphasizing police conduct and civil rights with the same passion as crime reductions.

"The fact is that a tragic event like the shooting of Amadou Diallo is not the fault of the Mayor or the Police Commissioner, and I'm not here to cast blame," said Borough President Fields.

"However, there is the sad reality that the Police Department treats some communities in this city with more respect and more consideration than others. It is incumbent on Mayor Giuliani and Police Commissioner Safir to help to change this inequality of treatment by setting a different tone for the Department."

Ms. Fields went on to outline a number of initiatives that would help set a tone of respect for all communities in the city, including:

- Leading by example by treating all communities with equal respect, regard and concern;
- Talking about the increase in civilian complaints of police misconduct with the same passion and frequency that they talk about crime reductions;
- Using civilian complaints of misconduct as well as crime reduction as indices in determining the effectiveness of crime strategies, i.e. the street crime units;
- Creating an independent investigative body to handle CCRB referrals of police misconduct;
- End the "48 hour rule," which although not invoked in this case, continues to undermine public confidence in the process of investigating police misconduct;
- Increasing community sensitivity training.

- more -

A broad spectrum of community leaders joined the elected leaders in voicing their concern and in support of this agenda, including: Lorraine Cortez-Vasquez of the Hispanic Federation; Moises Perez of Alianza Dominicana; Edgar Rodriguez of GOAL; Matt Foreman of the Empire State Pride Agenda; Virginia Kee of the Chinese-American Planning Council; Hilda Rodgers of the Metropolitan Council NAACP; Dr. James Forbes of the Pastor Riverside Church; Howard Tisch of the American Jewish Congress; and Robert Bellison of the American Jewish Congress.

“To prevent isolated tragedies from blowing up into highly charged events, the problem has to be addressed. and the way to do this is to set the tone from the top,” added Ms. Fields in closing. “Mayor Giuliani and Police Commissioner Safir, I urge you to begin setting the tone now. If you do, you can make all the communities of our city feel as though they are being fairly represented, fairly listened to and fairly treated under the law.”

##