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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO, FIRST LADY MCCRAY DELIVER REMARKS  
AT WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK AT 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF  
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.'S FINAL SPEECH**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good evening, everybody. I want to thank everyone for coming here. The skies are crying tonight because we mark a very solemn, painful, powerful occasion. Fifty years ago this evening was the last night of Martin Luther King Jr.'s life and that evening he gave a speech that defined his life's journey. And he spoke not only of all he had tried to do but he spoke of what he hoped for, for the future of this country.

I want to thank all of you for being here because your presence is part of continuing his dream. He never meant it to be an idea only for that time, for that year 1968. He meant it to be something that would live and grow. He never meant it to be just his dream. It was supposed to be everybody's and it required everyday people to stand up and do something. And you being here is a sign of the power of that dream and that that quest continues.

When we called people and said we wanted to do something special in this city tonight to remember his last night to remember the last time he spoke to us, a lot of people wanted to help and wanted to be a part of it.

I want to thank the folks who made this possible – everyone from the City including the Parks Department. I want to thank Brian Tovar and Jason Sherwood of LIVESIGHT, Bentley Meeker and Jeff Ledford of Bentley Meeker Lighting and Staging, and the Association for a Better New York – all of whom pitched in to make this possible.

I'm wearing a jacket as a reminder of what that last speech was about. This is a New York City Sanitation Department jacket. You'll remember Dr. King's last speech was to struggling sanitation workers who didn't have a champion. He went there to Memphis to help them because he believed the fight for economic justice was synonymous with the fight for civil rights. He stood by those sanitation workers. He died for them, for their cause too.

Fifty years ago he talked about going to a mountaintop and seeing a promised land. He believed that a vision of equality was possible. He believed there could be one day an America no longer consumed by racial and economic division.

Let's be honest with ourselves that Dr. dream – Dr. King's dream has not been realized. What he said then – the painful division he saw in the country 50 years ago this evening still exists. Dr. King's dream has not been realized but that does not mean we will not continue to fight for it.

America is still not living up to the ideals of our founding fathers 240 years-plus later. But brothers and sisters, there is still plenty of hope because we have the powerful lesson of Dr. King, we have the powerful lesson of everyone who marched with him and fought by his side.

And they have descendants today and you can see it all over this country. This is a time that reminds us of that last day of his life, when people rising up demanding fairness and justice – we see it in the teachers in West Virginia and Oklahoma and Kentucky. We see it in the students from Parkland, Florida and the students all over this nation.

[Applause]

We see it in the good people in Alabama who believed that change could be made in their state and shocked the world last November. We see it happening and we know it's now our responsibility to carry it on.

So before we present to you this speech, and you will get a chance to feel his words and feel as if you were there 50 years ago that night, let me turn to our First Lady. She was born the year of the Brown vs. Board of Education case. And in all she has done in her life from her youth until today, she has fought for a more equal world and against the stigmas and divisions that have held us back. Our First Lady, Chirlane McCray.

[Applause]

**First Lady Chirlane McCray:** Thank you, Bill. Good evening, everyone. It has been 50 years of struggle since Dr. King was taken from us but his words are alive. I would not be standing here today if his words had not inspired so many people over the years since he was taken from us.

His words are alive and speaking to us now. They are reminding us of our responsibility to take care of one another, of the opportunity that we have to make our city and nation better for all. And they are reminding us that by working together, by collaborating that we have so much more power to make change.

So let it rain because we are the fire that no water can put out. Thank you all for keeping Dr. King's vision alive today and going forward. Now, let us listen to his words and fill ourselves with determination and strength for the struggles ahead.

[Applause]

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