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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO, FIRST LADY MCCRAY DELIVER REMARKS
AT CELEBRATION TO HONOR THE LIFE OF MAYOR DAVID DINKINS**

First Lady Chirlane McCray: Good morning, family.

Audience: Good morning.

First Lady McCray: I've missed you so much and I'm deeply saddened to be here for this reason. I want to thank you, Rev, for this opportunity to pay tribute to David Dinkins -- a great man. A great, great man. He did so much for the city, it is impossible to give him fitting tribute in just a few words. My heart, my heart is heavy because he's no longer with us. I can't help but also feel tremendous joy to have known him. Of course, we wouldn't be standing -- I wouldn't be standing here if it were not for him. Many of you know that I was -- I served in his administration first, then the City Commission on Human Rights, and then as a speech writer. I was thrilled to become one of the speech writers. Let me tell you, that was something to call home about and later on Mayor Dinkins liked to say that his speech made -- the speech writers made him sound smart. I loved it when he said that, of course it wasn't true. Truth was it. was the other way around, that he made us smart. We had to dig deep. We had to learn about the history of our city. We had to learn about the communities, the strengths, the assets, the obstacles to the hopes and dreams. We had to work hard to keep up with him. I was so impressed by his energy. I didn't know how he did it. I didn't know anything about government and politics before I worked for him, and I couldn't understand how he did so much but I was fascinated by him. I wonder, what was his secret? And you know, the secret, it wasn't a secret at all which I found out. He found joy in the work that he did. That's what it was all about, the joy of working for our people, that joy generated energy and enthusiasm, fighting for safe streets, new community centers, keeping our public libraries open six days a week, for Beacon Schools for our children. That's what got him going in the morning.

[Applause]

Every time I think about him, I'm inspired, still, by Mayor David Dinkins. I used to say, you know, you're my favorite Mayor. I can't say this when Bill's around, of course, but you know --

[Laughter]

You are my favorite Mayor. And we talk a lot about gratitude this time of year, I feel gratitude for his life, for everything he gave me, gave us, beyond measure because I wouldn't be here. I wouldn't have met Bill. Chiara and Dante wouldn't have been born. And I'm so grateful that he and Joyce, a couple bounded by 66 years of marriage became dear family friends. I will always be grateful for Mayor David Dinkins, a New Yorker who inspired a generation of public servants. So, while we celebrate Mayor Dinkins today, we also honor him by continuing to be foot soldiers on the march for freedom, right? Every day, every day –

[Applause]

And it's my pleasure to introduce a former staffer and colleague from the Dinkins administration, someone's who's life definitely would not have been the same if he had not worked for Mayor David Dinkins. Someone who has carried forth the mission of fairness, justice, and equity with all of his heart, our Mayor, Bill de Blasio.

[Applause]

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Everyone, first of all, it is a special honor for every one of us to be in the same room with a man that David Dinkins called his brother, and he meant it in the fullest, deepest sense because David Dinkins leaned on Charlie Rangel and believed in him and he cared for him and he was moved and inspired by him, and we couldn't have done everything we did if it wasn't for Congressman Charlie Rangel. [Inaudible].

[Applause]

I also want everyone to know what you wear on your face says a lot, so I wore my Vote NYC face mask because people said David Dinkins couldn't win. I remember 1989 like it was yesterday. He wasn't supposed to be able to win the primary, let alone the general. They said it was impossible. Guess what? The people had a different idea. How many of you were around in 1989, who helped make it happen? Thank you. God bless you. You showed up and you changed the world and thank you to everyone who voted in 2020 as well. They said it couldn't be done, but we showed up in record numbers. God bless you.

[Applause]

Let's say three simple, brief things. First is, to remember the fullness of what that man achieved, what David Dinkins achieved in four years. Think about one beautiful, powerful moment, Charlie Rangel referred to, when Nelson Mandela came to New York City, it was breathtaking. It was so moving. I remember Nelson Mandela walked by me going into City Hall and it felt like, you know, times stood still. I was like, this is the most amazing experience because what this city did and what David Dinkins did. And God bless Bill Lynch too. He was so important. He believed in this.

[Applause]

They helped Nelson Mandela to the presidency of South Africa. Let's be clear, they treated him like the head of state he was meant to be and if you were here in Harlem to see him, or in the Canyon of Heroes, or if you were in Yankee stadium, anyone there remembers that beautiful

moment, wasn't that breathtaking? This city by honoring Nelson Mandela, changed the world. That was one day. That was one thing that David Dinkins did of so many, but don't forget what he did for us that will last until this day. He knew that this city could be better and that was his power. He told us he could be better and he did something about it. Yes, Rev is right, the reason we got safer, let's give credit where credit is due, safe streets, safe city, David Dinkins did that. But never forget what he insisted on. He said, it's not just our traditional notion of public safety. It's about kids. It's about kids. It's about families. He said, if we're going to be safer, there have to be afterschool programs. There has to be, he created the Beacon Programs and they live today, brothers and sisters, the Beacon Programs are alive and well, and the Beacon Schools are helping children today because of what David Dinkins did decades ago and we're building upon that. And I want to remind everyone that's our legacy, to take what David Dinkins started, keep it moving, keep it going.

And here's the last thing I want to say. It's about every one of us who was moved by him, nurtured by him, supported by him, encouraged by him, mentored by him. There's a whole generation in this city that got our start because of David Dinkins. They got a helping hand from David Dinkins, they got that word of encouragement. There's a generation of people who believe they can make a difference because they saw David Dinkins do it first. He has a human legacy you can feel right here in this room, right behind me, all these great people, everyone who brags that we had the honor to work for him, with him, to support him. He hasn't left us. He's left us physically. He hasn't left us in our hearts. His mission continues. He continues to inspire. I could feel his presence right here in this room, can you? Right here in this room.

[Applause]

So, Rev, thank you for bringing us together in this place synonymous with continuing a noble struggle, but David Dinkins used to always say to us, keep the faith. He knew we could do it. He believed in us. He made us better. He made us stronger and now we carry on his legacy. Thank you. God bless you all.

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