



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, NY 10007

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** October 15, 2015

**CONTACT:** [pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-2958

**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO AND FIRST LADY CHIRLANE MCCRAY DELIVER  
REMARKS AT NAMING CEREMONY FOR DAVID N. DINKINS BUILDING**

**First Lady Chirlane McCray:** Good morning, everyone, and welcome. What a beautiful day this is, I'm so happy. It is impossible to stand here and look at all of you and not be flooded with so many memories.

Who's ready to make some history?

[Cheers]

Today, we're going to rename one of New York City's historic buildings after an exceptional leader. And there are so many reasons why Mayor David Norman Dinkins and this glorious structure belong together. He is a native of Harlem, and he worked here for almost 15 years, and then as Manhattan borough president – 15 years as city clerk, and then Manhattan borough president. But the connection between the mayor and the Muni Building goes back even deeper to the very foundations of this treasured landmark. In 1898, the five boroughs officially unified into one city. That's when New York truly became New York. The Municipal Building was created to bring more of the city's public servants together in one place so they could better serve the people of New York. More than a century later, the Municipal Building is a bustling tribute to the notion that we are strongest when we work together – not despite our differences, but because of our differences – and that same notion has long guided the life and the career of Mayor David Dinkins.

Now, if I sound informed and passionate about the Muni Building, that is because I've had some practice. I was lucky enough to serve as a speech writer for Mayor David Dinkins. Now, Mayor Dinkins likes to say his speechwriters made him sound intelligent. Well, I like to say that writing for Mayor Dinkins helped us get intelligent.

[Laughter]

One of the speeches I wrote was for an event in 1991, marking the reinstallation of Civic Fame – the glittering gold statue that stands atop this building. I still remember that speech because the building is so historically significant, because the state is gorgeous, and because I got a little more educated about our city. But I'm going to be honest with you, I don't remember all the speeches I wrote back then, and that is because Mayor Dinkins kept us so busy. I've had two decades to ponder it, and I'm still amazed at his endless energy. All of you who worked for him back then, you know what I'm talking about.

[Laughter]

What was his secret? How did he squeeze so much work into so few hours? So, I think it just wasn't work for him, and that is what the secret was. Everything he did, from cutting the ribbon on a new Beacon Community Center, launching Fashion Week for the first time, creating Safe Streets, Safe Cities – yes, you can clap for that

–

[Applause]

– And reestablishing six-day a week service at our public libraries.

[Applause]

All of those things were done with a sense of purpose. His joy – his joy in lifting up all New Yorkers, especially those who have been left behind, was contagious. And I was so proud to work for him.

[Applause]

Just a minute – Mayor Dinkins has been known to say service is – service to others is the rent we pay for our time on earth. These words could easily become a cliché – the kind of canned speechifying that speech writers try so hard to avoid. But coming from Mayor Dinkins, it always rang true. His legacy is a steady source of illumination – an inspiration for Bill, and me, and the entire administration as we strive to advance his vision of a more just, equal, and unified city.

Mayor Dinkins, thank you, and congratulations. It is now my pleasure to introduce Carl Weisbrod, another native New Yorker who has devoted his life to others. There's so much I could tell you about Carl's many career highlights, but right now you need only to know two things. During the Dinkins administration, Carl served as founding president of the New York City Economic Development Corporation, and played a key role in reshaping our neighborhoods for the better, including Times Square. Today, he serves as chair of the City Planning Commission, and Bill and I are both elated to count him as a teammate once again. So, Carl, would you mind sharing a few words?

[...]

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Thank you so much, Carl. Let's give Carl Weisbrod a round of applause for all he's done for this city – thank you.

[Applause]

My dear friends – and there are so many wonderful friends here today – it is such a special moment for this city, it's such a beautiful day for this city – maybe a little chilly – but our hearts are warm, are they not?

[Applause]

It's a great day for the city because we're celebrating a truly good man. We're celebrating someone who has always reminded us of how to live and how to serve others. Everything he does, from the very beginning of his public life to this very day, the way he treats people, from a child he meets on the sidewalk to the loftiest leader of a foreign nation, one thing we love about David Norman Dinkins is his profound decency, his goodness, his commitment to others. It always inspired us. It always moved us. I'm looking around at this audience full of people who served in his administration and served with him at other times, and so many people who've devoted your lives to public service, and I know you felt what I felt, what Chirlane felt – we felt called to service because we had an example, we had a leader that truly believed. And he walked the walk.

What you saw was what you got. He cared about people. He cared about everyone. And that's the kind of person we need to celebrate. It's a moment in history where we could use more civility. We could use more decency. We could use more love. We could use more compassion. We had those things in Mayor Dinkins and we have to celebrate them.

[Applause]

Now, it's important also to have a moment of appreciation to all of you who have helped make this city greater and greater, and all of you who particularly served under Mayor Dinkins. So I'm going to say a few things I think will bring back good memories – and I want to start by saying one ought not –

[Laughter]

– one ought not underestimate the contributions of Mayor David Dinkins.

[Applause]

You noted that we had the young performer begin the program because you know the children are our future.

[Laughter]

In fact, if Mayor Dinkins was speaking to one of the children, he would say, “You really are, you know.”

[Laughter]

And Chirlane mentioned his boundless energy – I want to remind you, this is a man who typically went to bed around midnight and got up at 5 am, and never stopped serving in between. Now, yes, there was sometimes a tennis game in there, but that is why he could go to bed at midnight and get up at 5 am. And one other thing was true – people wondered how he kept his grace and dignity – as some of you will know it was a very strong devotion to presenting himself as the leader of this greatest city in the world the right way, and it was also a devotion to knowing that more than once a day you might need to shower and change.

[Laughter]

So I've taken you all back to a time filled with promise, because people believed. People believed, and people from every part of this city, every walk of life believed together – and that is the genius of David Dinkins. He brought everyone together in one place to serve this city.

[Applause]

Now, I want to thank, first of all, all the family and close friends of Mayor Dinkins who are here today. And let us take this moment to thank another leader who showed us what it was like to serve with warmth and decency and compassion amidst every storm – she was a tremendous first lady – First Lady Joyce Dinkins, we thank you.

[Applause]

And thank you for coaching our current first lady.

Afterwards, one of you will recount – is it the ditch-digger story or the gas station attendant? But let us just say that Joyce Dinkins contributed greatly to the greatness of David Dinkins.

[Applause]

The second – I want to thank someone who I usually refer to in a lot of different ways, but I think it's time to use a Dinkins-ism here – I want to thank my bride –

[Laughter]

– because she is all heart, as you just saw, and we are blessed – I am blessed – but we are blessed to have a first lady who feels so much for this city and shows her love for everyone – and you just saw it before – First Lady Chirlane McCray.

[Applause]

I want to thank all the elected officials who are here. I want to thank the clergy, the labor leaders, the community leaders, and everyday people whose lives were made better by David Dinkins.

And one of the things that we all learned when we worked for David Dinkins is do not start randomly acknowledging people in the audience.

[Laughter]

Because Mayor Dinkins would start, and then he'd say, well, now I need to acknowledge the next person, and the next person, and then most of us would be checking our watches about a half-hour later, waiting for his actual remarks to begin. So I will not do that, but I'm going to do one – only one – additional special recognition, because I think it is so worthy.

Mayor Dinkins made history, and reminded us that change was always available to us if we believed, if we worked hard enough. I remind you, in 1989, I joined the campaign in May of 1989, and I will tell you, there were many, many people in this city who thought it was impossible to elect an African American mayor. That was a commonplace part of our public discourse. Mayor Dinkins didn't fall for that. He believed – and he blazed a trail. But there are others who have done the same under very difficult circumstance – one of them is here with us – one of the original Tuskegee Airmen, Roscoe Brown, thank you.

[Applause]

You don't need to go to the movie, you can just come up and talk to him – he'll tell you all about it.

Now, let me speak a little personally about what Mayor Dinkins meant to me, because I saw a man who had that extraordinary ability to bring people together, and had that ability to change things that weren't supposed to be changeable, and I was inspired. And so, as I said, I joined his campaign in May of 1989.

And I have to tell the truth, you know, we didn't know what was going to happen. It was a very, very tough campaign – we didn't know what was going to happen. I didn't assume, hey, it's going to be easy, and then everyone's going to get a great job in government. We all were in it because we believed it was the right thing to do. And then we won.

Against all odds, we won, because we believed and so many other people believed and we took this message to the people all over the city. And then Mayor Dinkins was gracious enough to give me an opportunity to serve in government. And it was my first serious job in government. And for those of you who remember, before City Hall was made a little more modern and the Tweed building was cleaned up, some of our cubicles and work spaces were a little humble, but we were glad to be there, because we believed in something.

And then one day I was sitting at my humble cubicle in City Hall, minding my own business – that's how all my stories begin – I was minding my own business, and I looked up and saw a vision of grace and beauty gliding my way. And my friends, if there is love at first sight I think I experienced it. And so I always say – I've got a lot to thank Mayor Dinkins for – as a citizen, for all he did for this city; I have a lot to thank him for professionally for giving me an opportunity to serve; but I think the thing I want to thank him for most is I didn't need online dating.

[Laughter]

I got to work in an administration full of wonderful people, and one of them walked right up to me and now she is my wife, our First Lady, the love of my life, and the partner in all I do – so thank you, Mayor Dinkins.

[Applause]

And Mr. Mayor, you know, sometimes in life we know – it happens all over, especially in New York City – sometimes people ask the question what have you done for me lately? But I remind Chiara and Dante that if it weren't for you they wouldn't be here. So they don't have to ask you that question. You are paid in full when it comes to them.

So I remember that moment in history. And it was a tough time. It was a tough time economically. It was a tough time in terms of the tensions between communities. We needed to move forward. And when David Dinkins started talking about the gorgeous mosaic, it wasn't just words. It wasn't something he said as a soundbite. It was what he believed we were. It was what he saw us as and thought we could live up to.

A mosaic is beautiful – it's beautiful because each piece shines, each has its distinct identity but comes together as a unified whole – that was the animating philosophy. And he lived it – in the way he treated everyone, in the way he invited everyone in to his administration, and in the way he served all communities.

You know, it was not easy. Now this is a mayor who often felt the slings and arrows – many, many of them quite unfair, I might add. But it never changed him. And that's part of why we're celebrating him today as well, because it never changed him. I don't remember any moment where this – I was going to say former marine, but there is no such thing as a former marine, correct, mayor?

**Former Mayor David Dinkins:** Right.

**Mayor:** Okay. I learned that one too. We are not allowed to call him former marine. He is a current marine. This marine never talked about retreating. He believed that our mission was to change things and make them better and we would go through whatever fire. And for so many of us, that was our grounding. That was our lesson. And it gave us strength to see a leader who didn't crack under the fire. It taught us how to live a better way.

Now, it's important we get the history right, and one of the most important things I could say to you today is the history still doesn't accurately identify what this mayor did for this city. It just doesn't.

[Applause]

And it's something we need to fix in our public discourse. It's something we need to speak to as witnesses. Because when this mayor took office in 1990, this was not a safe city. It just wasn't. And someone had to make the change. And the only way to make the change was to do something very different. And Mayor Dinkins went to Albany with a very challenging mission – to achieve a fundamental change, to increase our police force to match the challenge of the moment, to ask New Yorkers to give a little more so we could turn the corner and make the city safe, to ask Albany to be a partner. And he partnered brilliantly with the City Council, then led by Peter Vallone Sr., and they formed a team and they went to Albany and they achieved something that, bluntly, the pundits said would be impossible. And that day that Safe Streets Safe City was voted into law was the day this city started its journey to safety. It's as simple as that.

[Applause]

We are now on an almost quarter-century long path of progress towards and safer and safer city, and it started with David Dinkins. That is the fact we have to remind the people of this city.

[Applause]

But again, it was Safe Streets, Safe City – it was not just about the importance of having more police officers, it was about reaching our young people in a different way. And you hear what Melissa said about the beacon programs. Then at that moment, people knew, teachers knew, police officers knew that we couldn't turn the corner on crime if we didn't reach our young people in a different, more positive way. And so, Mayor Dinkins said – and this was something he was passionate about – Safe Streets, Safe City – subtitle – cops and kids – reaching our children to make the city safer too.

[Applause]

Those beacon programs are still a part of this city – a great part of this city, and a lasting legacy. There's so many other things I could point to. I could point to the U.S. Open, one of the greatest events in the entire country that's great because of what David Dinkins did.

[Applause]

I could point to all of the affordable housing he ensured was built. I could point to all the public servants who are still public servants today who he got started. There are so many things that I could talk about. And I have to take a moment also to say so many people loved him, believed in him, supported him – one of them is no longer with us, and I have to note today, we miss Bill Lynch deeply.

[Applause]

Mary, Stacy, I know Mayor Dinkins would be the first to say – it's his day, but we all have to recognize that we were all so elevated in so many ways by Bill Lynch, and we miss him.

[Applause]

So, I've told you about the quality of the man – told you about the continuity of his legacy; the fact that we are safer at this very moment because of what he started; the fact that are better people and a more unified people because of what he started; the fact that his example of leadership and goodness is more pertinent today even than when he was our mayor. That's why it's so important to mark this legacy. And boy, what a beautiful building to name after a wonderful man.

[Applause]

So, I'll conclude my English-language remarks with a simple message. Mayor Dinkins, sometimes I get to speak for all of us. So, on behalf of 8.5 million New Yorkers, I want to say a simple thing to you – thank you. Thank you for all you have done for us.

[Applause]

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

Now, before the man of the hour speaks, we have plaques that are being placed all around this building to note that it has now been renamed for a great man. And I'd like to ask Mayor Dinkins to come forward for the unveiling for the first plaque.

[Applause]

[Mayor de Blasio unveils plaques]

Ladies and gentlemen – wait, wait, bring him forward because it's the main event now.

[Laughter]

Ladies and gentlemen, I've rarely had a greater joy in bringing forward the man of the hour – the man who deserves this honor deeply, who gave us such strength, and continues to give us strength – the 106th mayor of the city of New York, David N. Dinkins.

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