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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS HOLDS RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY
FOR NEW TOMMIE AGEE MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Madelene Chan, District 24 Superintendent, Department of Education: Good morning, honorable Mayor Adams, Borough President Richards, District Attorney Katz, Councilman Moya, First Deputy Chancellor Weisberg, Department of Education staff, the Amazing Mets, the Agee family, honored guests, faculty, IS 419 students and families. This is such a special day.

Chan: As the proud superintendent of this wonderful district it is always thrilling to open a new school. Thank you to the school construction authority, who have afforded this district with magnificent structures for our students. And once again, they have certainly come through.

Soledad Montañez, Principal, Department of Education: Okay, thank you, Dr. Chan. [Speaks in Spanish.]

Chan: This school will exemplify everything that Tommy Agee represented, fortitude, perseverance, and strong values. This school, under the phenomenal leadership of Principal Montañez, will show students how to make their dreams come true. Thank you to our mayor and our chancellor for always supporting our efforts, and to Assembly member Aubry for the recommendation to name I.S. 419 after the great Tommy Agee.

Chan: This is such a memorable day for our students, their families, the community, and district 24, because it is filled with hope and bright new beginnings. Thank you all so very much.

Montañez: [Speaks in Spanish.]

Montañez: Thank you. Okay, my turn. Hello, hello, good morning. Let me just take one minute to take this all in because this is such an amazing gift. Thank you. Hello, my name is Soledad Montañez, and I am the proud founding principal of Middle School 419. I am so excited to be here today with incoming students and their families, founding faculty, our elected officials, Mayor Adams, Senator Ramos, Assembly Member Aubry, Queens Borough President Richards, District Attorney Katz, Council Member Moya, as well as the Department of Education Superintendent Dr. Chan, Deputy Chancellor Weisberg, School Construction Authority,

representatives from our co-located district 75 school, the Riverside School, the Mets, and the Agee family.

Montañez: My parents, who are in the crowd, please raise your hands. That's right. Mami y papi immigrated our family from Uruguay shortly after I was born, and raised us here in Elmhurst, Queens. It is such a privilege to be opening up a school in the same district that raised me.

Montañez: Our school's building is named after one of the Miracle Mets players of the 1969 World Series, Tommie Agee. I had the privilege of meeting Tommie's wife, where we spoke about what makes dreams come true. Tommy and his teammates used to say, "You've got to believe." And that I do indeed.

Montañez: But to believe we must be brave. And here we are at Middle School 419 in the home of the brave Tigers. We are bright. We are resilient. We are adaptable. We are virtuous, and we are empowered to be the change we wish to see in our communities and in the world around us. Parents who are in the crowd, I promise to cultivate a school community that amplifies each individual student's strengths and fosters a love for learning. We will celebrate Tommie's legacy by being brave and believing that we can be impactful and purposeful here in Corona and East Elmhurst and in the world around us. Thank you for being here with us today to celebrate the naming of our school building. I look forward to embarking on this journey together and shaping our futures in partnership. Thank you.

Montañez: Okay, [Speaks in Spanish]. Thank you.

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Julissa Ferreras-Copeland: Thank you. Thank you very much, Council Member Moya and Senator Ramos, for all your support. And today, we've been talking about many people that have made today possible, but in reality, the best partner to have to make today happen, and without further ado, help me with a very big round of applause to bring up our illustrious mayor, Mayor Adams.

Mayor Eric Adams: One rule I live by from my days of policing. You do not stand for me. I stand for you. I'm here to serve you. If you only know what this moment means for me. Yes we can look at the Hall of Fame career. Yes we could talk about that amazing year going the year previous only winning a small number of games and being in ninth place. Yes we could look at his record 26 homers, 96 runs batted in. Yes we can look at the energy he brought to the field and how much it meant for those of us who sat in the shadows of other teams. We could look at all of that.

Mayor Adams: And being able to have a school named after you is so significant. But the great Hall of Famer Tommie Agee played the role on the young men who grew up during that era. I was nine years old at that time, and we were in dark places as children in South Jamaica, Queens. Thinking about the impossible, what we couldn't do, and how we were really just relegated to a position of never really having a role in this city.

Mayor Adams: And then the Miracle Mets, they came along. Ron Swoboda. Ed Kranepool. The good-looking Cleon Jones. Ah. And that whole team. And we saw Black men that were dignified. We started not only to believe in the game of baseball, but we started to believe in ourselves. And I was a nine year old child, dyslexic, trying to figure out why I couldn't learn. I was a nine year old child living on the verge of homelessness, a nine year old child that was just really trying to figure out, where was my place in this city? And all those nine year old boys that grew up in South Jamaica, Queens, grew up here in Corona, grew up in the South Bronx. When we saw that team, when we saw them play, it meant so much to us.

Mayor Adams: And the Mets were counted out. People thought that they would never be able to win a championship. They were an expansion team, eight years out, the first expansion team to win a World Series in such a short period of time. And we see the naming of this school today, I think it's a symbolic moment. Because it's significant to all those young people who believe they're counted out right now. We need a miracle again. But they believed. They believed.

Mayor Adams: And I don't care who you are and where you're from. I know there's a lot of cities in America. But trust me. Just like you should never count out the Mets, you better never count out New York City. We're resilient. We are invincible. We lead the way in comebacks. And so when these children walk through the door, they shouldn't just see the name Tommie Agee. Part of the lesson plan should be, let me tell you who he is and what he represents and why each one of those students have a Tommie Agee inside them. And they also have inside them many of our Latino ballplayers that really carved the way what we're seeing today.

Mayor Adams: When these children are allowed to see the sports figures, they know what it is to get booed. They know what it is to be in a slump. They know what it is to strike out. They know what it is to leave players on deck. They know what it is not to win all the time. But a fallback is really your step forward. And so I'm so proud to be here today. Tommie Agee meant so much to me, and all of those players of the '69 Mets meant so much to me. They took a young man that was dyslexic, arrested, rejected, now he's elected. He's the mayor of the City of New York.

Mayor Adams: And so congratulations to all those who participated in ensuring that we are naming a school after my childhood hero, Tommie Agee, Hall of Famer, leader, a great person, one of the greatest members of the greatest race alive, and that's the human race. Thank you so much.

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Mayor Adams: So on behalf of the people of the City of New York. Whereas as New Yorkers, we owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Tommie Agee, whose legacy lives on through his beloved family and the enduring impact he made in business, sports, and his community. Throughout his career and post retirement, he displayed a steadfast commitment to improving the game of baseball, mentoring young players, and creating spaces where New Yorkers of all backgrounds could gather, bond, and build lasting connections. His enormous contribution to the five boroughs cannot be overstated.

Mayor Adams: As you gather at the former site of the outfielders lounge, I am immensely proud to honor the life and achievement of Tommie Agee and join in celebrating the ribbon cutting of Tommie L. Agee Middle School. Therefore, I, Eric Adams, mayor of the City of New York, do hereby proclaim Friday, August 26, 2022, in the City of New York, Tommie Lee Agee Day.

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