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# Mayor de Blasio Appoints Carmelyn P. Malalis as Chair of the City's Commission on Human Rights, Names Eight new Commissioners

November 21, 2014

***Spanning ethnic, religious and professional backgrounds, new appointees bring a staunch commitment to social justice and human dignity to CCHR***

**NEW YORK**—Building on his commitment to promote New York City’s progressive human rights law and effective community relations in a diverse city, Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced his appointment of Carmelyn P. Malalis as the new Chair of the City’s Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) and named eight new commissioners to the agency: Ana Oliveira, Catherine Albisa, Arnaldo Segarra, Domna Stanton, Steven Choi, Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum, Jonathan Greenspun, and Reverend Dr. Demetrius Carolina.

The new Chair and commissioners will be charged with leading the agency’s efforts to enforce New York City’s Human Rights Law—one of the most comprehensive civil rights laws in the nation—and with educating the public about it and encouraging positive community relations.

“Hailing from Brooklyn to Brazil and ranging from rabbis to pastors, today’s appointees represent a diverse, progressive and exceptionally qualified group sharing an unwavering commitment to safeguard the rights and dignity of all people in New York City,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “I’m confident that with Carmelyn at the helm of CCHR, this agency will be a robust enforcer of our fundamental civil rights and improve community relations among New Yorkers throughout the five boroughs.”

Malalis, most recently a partner at Outten & Golden LLP and the co-chair of the firm’s LGBT Workplace Rights and Disability and Family Responsibilities Discrimination practice groups, is a highly regarded and accomplished attorney who brings years of experience representing and advising clients in employment discrimination suits, as well as other employment-related matters. During her time at Outten & Golden LLP, Malalis has successfully represented employees in matters involving claims of

sexual harassment and discrimination based on race, national origin, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy, disability and religious discrimination, among others.

“I commend Mayor Bill de Blasio on his appointment of Carmelyn P. Malalis as the new chair of the City’s Commission on Human Rights and his naming of eight new commissioners to the agency. These appointments strongly reflect the Mayor’s unwavering commitment to protect the human rights and dignity of people in our great city. I congratulate all of the appointees and wish them great success in their new positions,” said **Council Member Mathieu Eugene**.

“I congratulate newly appointed CCHR Chair Carmelyn Malalis and the eight diverse commissioners who will assist her in ensuring that New Yorkers are aware of and have full access to the protections of our City’s extensive human rights laws. New York City’s diversity makes us stronger, and it is my hope that our anti-discrimination protections continue to expand and are ever more effectively enforced,” said **Council Member Robert Cornegy**.

“The New York City Commission on Human Rights is a vital place for protecting New Yorkers from discrimination and advancing human rights. Congratulations to the de Blasio administration on appointing a smart and committed, diverse set of commissioners,” said **Council Member Brad Lander**.

“I am proud to say I personally know many of the Mayor’s appointees to the City’s Commission on Human Rights, and I can attest to their integrity, dedication and commitment to protecting the rights of all New Yorkers,” said **Council Member Daniel Dromm**. “I commend Mayor de Blasio for revitalizing this very important commission.”

### **About Carmelyn P. Malalis**

For the past decade, Carmelyn P. Malalis has worked as a partner at Outten and Golden LLP—one of the City’s premier plaintiff side law firms—and its co-chair of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Workplace Rights Practice Group and the Family Responsibilities and Disability Discrimination Practice Group. In these roles, Malalis has been tasked with a large litigation and negotiation docket, including class actions and individual client cases, and she advises clients on a broad array of employment-related matters. Malalis’s work also includes several advocacy and pro bono projects in collaboration with grassroots organizations and legal services providers advocating on behalf of low-wage and immigrant workers; LGBT employees; and women in the workplace. Prior to Outten and Golden LLP, Malalis worked as a litigation associate at Sullivan & Cromwell LLP, and she has served as a judicial law clerk for the U.S. Magistrate Judge Ronald L. Ellis.

Malalis, whose parents come from the Philippines, co-chairs the Diversity in the Legal Profession Committee of the American Bar Association Labor and Employment Law Section. She is also a member of the New York City Bar Association’s Executive Committee. Malalis has previously served as an advisory committee member of the LGBT Rights Project at the Human Rights Watch, chair of the New York City Bar Association’s Committee on LGBT Rights, and board member of Queers for Economic Justice.

Malalis earned her J.D. from the Northeastern University School of Law and received a B.A. in women’s studies from Yale University. She and her spouse live in Park Slope, Brooklyn, with their two children.

### **Meet the Eight New CCHR Commissioners:**

### Ana Oliveira

An immigrant from São Paulo, Brazil, Ana Oliveira, president and chief executive officer of The New York Women's Foundation, has spent more than 25 years working in the field of public health for underserved populations. Oliveira previously led the Gay Men's Health Crisis and co-chaired the Young Men's Initiative.

As the first woman and Latina Executive Director named to Gay Men's Health Crisis, Oliveira oversaw a complete overhaul of the agency over a seven year period (1998-2006). Prior to her work at Gay Men's Health Crisis, Oliveira spearheaded innovative community-based programs at Samaritan Village, the Osborne Association, Kings County and at Lincoln Hospitals.

Oliveira has served as a member of the New York City HIV Planning Council and the New York City Commission on AIDS, chaired the NYC Commission for LGBTQ Runaway and Homeless Youth, and co-chaired Mayor Bloomberg's Young Men's Initiative and the Board of the Women's Funding Network.

Oliveira has an M.A. in Medical Anthropology from the New School for Social Research.

### Catherine Albisa

Catherine Albisa, co-founder and director of the National Economic and Social Rights Initiative (NESRI), is a constitutional and human rights lawyer with a background on the right to health.

Previously, Albisa directed the Human Rights in the US program at the Center for Economic and Social Rights, served as associate director of the Human Rights Institute at Columbia Law School, and co-directed the International Women's Human Rights Law Clinic at CUNY Law School. She has also served as a board chair of the Center for Constitutional Rights.

Born in Brooklyn, Albisa graduated from Columbia Law School and the University of Miami.

### Arnaldo Segarra

Arnaldo Segarra, a native of East Harlem raised in the Johnson Projects, is a lifelong organizer who began his political career at the East Harlem Tenants Council in the mid-60s. A well-known activist, Segarra served in the Lindsay administration as Special Assistant for Puerto Rican Affairs.

In 1972, his record of organizing led Segarra to Washington, D.C., where he helped establish the first Office of Hispanic Affairs for the Democratic National Committee. Segarra served President Jimmy Carter as Director for Hispanic Affairs in the North East Region during his first presidential campaign and on the Carter transition team. Back in New York, Segarra worked under his longtime friend and former Mayor David Dinkins as Director of Mayoral Advance & as Special Assistant; for Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer as Special Assistant; and for Comptroller William Thompson as Director of the Advance Team & an Assistant with Community Relations.

Segarra attended Paul Smith's College on a basketball scholarship, and has been recognized with accolades like "Distinguished Hispanic of NY" and as one of the "80 NY Boricua Greats." He is also a recipient of the "Unsung Hero" Award in 2004.

### Domna Stanton

Born in Greece, Domna Stanton has served as a member of the board of Human Rights Watch for 10 years, and remains a part of the organization's Women's Right Division and the Policy Committee. A distinguished professor at CUNY Graduate Center, Stanton's current PhD seminar focuses on human rights and critical theory. Her scholarship also covers Seventeenth Century French Literature and Culture, Feminist Theory. Among her extensive professional accomplishments, Stanton was the first female editor of PMLA, the journal of the Modern Language Association (MLA), was MLA's president from 2005 to 2006.

In addition to her positions at the Human Rights Watch, Stanton has served a number of civic organizations, including Maison Francaise with Columbia University, The Century Association, International Planned Parenthood Federation for the Americas, Scholars at Risk, Gotham Chamber Opera Company, and Parkinson's Disease Foundation. Previously the Elizabeth M. Douvan Collegiate Professor at the University of Michigan, Stanton received her Ph.D. from Columbia University.

### Steven Choi

Since 2013, Steven Choi has been the executive director for the New York Immigration Coalition, a nearly 200-member organization that promotes immigrants' full civic participation, fosters their leadership, and provides a unified platform for collective action for New York's diverse immigrant communities. Previously, Choi worked as the executive director of the MinKwon Center for Community Action; program director for YKASEC - Empowering the Korean American Community; and director of the Korean Workers Project at the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF).

Choi has served at the Association of Neighborhood Housing & Development, North Star Fund, Human Services Council Board, and The Impact Center for Public Interest Law at NYU Law School. He earned his J.D. from Harvard Law School, an M.A. in Korean Studies from the University of Hawaii, and a B.A. in History from Stanford University.

### Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum

Sharon Kleinbaum is Senior Rabbi at Congregation Beit Simchat Torah (CBST) and a human rights activist. She has rallied for causes ranging from farmers' rights to LGBT equality, and protested the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Under Kleinbaum's leadership, CBST has emerged as a vibrant and progressive religious voice, fighting to secure civil rights for LGBT people everywhere.

She has previously worked at the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism in Washington, DC. Rabbi Kleinbaum is a graduate of the Orthodox Frisch Yeshiva High School and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.

### Jonathan Greenspun

Born in Brooklyn, Greenspun is a political consultant and a managing director at Mercury Public Affairs. From 2002 to 2006, he served as the Community Affairs Unit commissioner—one of the youngest commissioners in the history of New York City government. Prior to working for the City of New York, Greenspun served under Governor George E. Pataki. Greenspun's political work includes Mike Bloomberg's 2001 mayoral campaign; Rick Lazio's 2000 Senate campaign; Al D'Amato's 1998 Senate campaign; and Governor Pataki's 1994 and 1998 gubernatorial campaigns.

Greenspun serves on a number of civic boards, including The Museum of Jewish Heritage- A Living Memorial to the Holocaust; The New York City Chapter of the League of Conservation Voters; the Executive Committee of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York. A past board member

of The Jewish National Fund, Greenspun was also president of his local synagogue. He and his wife reside in Riverdale with their three children.

### Reverend Dr. Demetrius Carolina

An outspoken civil rights advocate, Reverend Dr. Demetrius Carolina is the pastor of the First Central Baptist Church on Staten Island.

Since 2005, Carolina has been the executive director of Central Life Family Center. Previously, Carolina worked as acting dean and Professor at Strayer University; associate professor at the New York School of Divinity; adjunct professor at Metropolitan College of NY; vice president of operations and community relations with M.B.D. Community Housing corporation; Dean of Students at Berkeley College; and Coordinator of Student Affairs and adjunct professor at Camden Community College.

Born in Manhattan, Carolina received a Doctorate of Educational Leadership from the University of Phoenix, completed Post Master's Research at NYU, and earned his Masters of Educational Administration from Temple University.

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