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**Senator Cordell Cleare Commemorates Historic Anniversary of the March on Washington with Event Acknowledging A Harlem Site’s Pivotal Role: Harlem Townhouse Served as the Headquarters for the National March that Changed the Course of American History**

HARLEM, NEW YORK – On August 28, 2023, 60 years to the day of the historic March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Senator Cordell Cleare and Save Harlem Now!, will be commemorating this significant moment in American history by placing a marker on a three-story building located at 170 West 130<sup>th</sup> Street. The building, which is now a residential building owned by the City’s Department of Housing Preservation & Development (HPD), served as the official headquarters for the planning of the March on Washington which had a record-setting attendance of over 250,000 participants who assembled on the National Mall in the nation’s capital city. The purpose of the March was to issue a collective call to action for a change in laws that would eliminate the legal barriers to economic, educational, and political equality for generations of Black Americans. The March paved the way for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The March would not have been possible without the vision of A. Phillip Randolph and Bayard Rustin. Randolph was a gospel minister, activist, and the founder of the first Black trade union, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. He was the Director of the March on Washington campaign. Rustin, was widely known as the “Socrates of the Civil Rights Movement.” Rustin had already worked for years as an organizer and advocate for civil rights before taking on the role as the deputy director of the March on Washington campaign. From the building on 130<sup>th</sup> Street in Harlem, both men served as the architects and coordinators of the largest gathering for civil rights in American history. A task they successfully achieved in only 90 days.

“Harlem was, and continues to serve as the place where all points converge in the cultivation and dissemination of Black culture,” said **New York Senator Cordell Cleare**. “There is no shortage of history in Harlem and preserving that history for future generations is paramount to establishing policies that continue to advance equality here and throughout the nation. While we gathered on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. to celebrate the March, it is important to remember that large movements are launched from anywhere, including a townhouse in Harlem.”

“Everyone remembers that the March ended at the Lincoln Memorial,” said **Walter Naegle**, the longtime partner of Bayard Rustin. “But what made it possible was the work that began in this building in Harlem. Weeks of work in a humble walkup, with no elevator, no air conditioning, but lots of talent, dedication, and two inspiring leaders.”

“Save Harlem Now! understands the importance of remembering neighborhoods and buildings in Harlem,” said **Valerie Bradley, President of Save Harlem Now!** “If we don't save important sites, we lose our history. The building at 170 West 130th Street is iconic and a reminder of how African Americans organized the most powerful march for civil rights and voting rights in America's history. Today, those rights are eroding. We cannot let that happen. To honor the building where it all happened renews our resolve to stay the course...and reminds us that it happened in Harlem.”

"In designating the Central Harlem – West 130th-132nd Streets Historic District in 2018, the Landmarks Preservation Commission recognized the national significance of 170 West 130th Street as the National Headquarters for the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom and its pivotal role as an incubator for political and social change," said **Landmarks Preservation Commission Chair Sarah Carroll.** "Today, on the 60th anniversary of the historic march that was organized from this building, it is especially meaningful to celebrate its legacy as an inspiration to present-day New Yorkers and future generations alike."

### **About Senator Cordell Cleare**

Senator Cleare is currently serving in her first full term from District 30, representing Central Harlem, East Harlem (El Barrio), West Harlem, a portion of Manhattan's Upper West Side, and the Washington Heights neighborhoods. Raised in Harlem, Cleare is the second woman in the State's history to hold this seat in the State Senate. She is currently the Chair of the Senate Committee on Aging.

### **About Save Harlem Now!**

"Save Harlem Now!" is a membership, nonprofit, advocacy organization, dedicated to protecting, preserving, and celebrating Harlem's irreplaceable heritage. Through partnerships with community members, elected officials, and preservation organizations, Save Harlem Now! ensures Harlem's built environment and cultural legacy is preserved for future generations.

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