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FREDERICK DAVIE
CHAIR

**Speech of Rev. Frederick Davie, Chair of the Civilian Complaint
Review Board before the Faith & Community Leaders Breakfast at
St. Paul's Chapel at Trinity Church Wall Street**

April 25, 2018

(As prepared for delivery)

Good morning. Mayor de Blasio, thank you for that warm introduction, and thank you for extending me the opportunity to serve. Reverend Varghese, thank you for the inspirational invocation.

To my fellow faith leaders and to the community leaders in attendance, thank you all for what you do for the people of New York City and for being here today.

This position as Chair of the Civilian Complaint Review Board is truly a humbling one. And I accept it with honor and gratitude.

I know this will sound strange coming for me, especially considering my biography, but in many ways, I'm a pretty traditional guy. This is especially true for me when it comes to public service or civic engagement.

In Belmont, during the early days of racial integration in the South, I, as a teenager, stood with many of my fellow teens to demand fair treatment by public officials—from the school principal to the city council to the mayor to the police chief.

That remained true when home became New York City, when, in 1989, I was a Revson fellow for a year at Columbia University and an executive with the New York City Mission Society.

At Columbia, the late Professor Eli Ginsberg who supervised the Revson fellowship program, told all of us that public service, civic participation was one of the highest callings we could

have. I was in that fellowship program the year David Dinkins was elected Mayor of the city and was invited to sit on one of the transition committees for Mayor-elect Dinkins.

All the while, the question persisted: What can I do to make this new home, New York City, a more hospitable place?

Admittedly, that's a tough question to answer in city like New York, a city where so much happens so fast, where it can be tough for a guy from small town USA to find his way. But sometimes, it just so happens that the way finds you.

Obviously, had anyone told me as a boy in Belmont that one day I would work with the future Mayor and First Lady of New York City and that one day that Mayor would appoint me chair of the nation's largest civilian police oversight entity, it would have all seemed fantastical, just a little too far-fetched.

But then again, sometimes—when you have faith in the idea that you were put on this planet for a purpose—the way finds you.

I want to thank Mayor de Blasio for this opportunity, and I thank him and Chirlane, our First Lady of New York, for their decades of public service.

I'd also like to thank the entire staff of the Center on Faith and Community Partnerships and Trinity Church for helping the CCRB organize this breakfast. I also want to thank the rector of Trinity Church, the Rev. Bill Lupfer. Bill is a friend of Union Seminary and an alum of my alma mater, Yale Divinity School.

I also want to thank my fellow board members for their support and their hard work on behalf of the City. I offer a particular word of gratitude to the staff of the CCRB, with a special shout out to the three people that I work with most closely everyday: Jonathan Darche, executive director; Jerika Richardson, senior advisor and secretary to the board; and Matt Kadushin, the agency's general counsel. Let me also express appreciation to my colleague and my friend the Rev Dr. Serene Jones, President of Union Theological Seminary, where I serve as Executive Vice President. Serene ever so graciously has given me her blessing and encouragement as I assume this role.

As people of faith, as trusted leaders in our communities, I believe we all have a moral obligation to help bridge the gap between police and civilians.

This is especially true when it comes to members of vulnerable communities, who may feel especially helpless, hopeless, and utterly alone after they experience police misconduct. For

many people of color, undocumented New Yorkers, LGBT New Yorkers, homeless New Yorkers, and young New Yorkers, your house of worship or local community center may be the only place where there's peace.

So today, the CCRB is calling on you to be a part of our ongoing dialogue. We need your help to ensure that people in your communities know this Agency is an independent, impartial resource they can trust.

We are accountable to each other. It's baked into the very essence of our democracy. My colleagues and I take this responsibility seriously. We serve as a national model of what a robust relationship of mutual accountability and trust between the police and the citizens of a city should look like. We want to make the Board better every day.

We thank you for being here, for your time, and for your leadership. Thank you.