



April 2 , 2019

New York State Board of Parole
Supervising Offender Rehabilitation Coordinator
Bedford Hills Correctional Facility
247 Harris Road
Bedford Hills, NY 10507-2400

Dear Commissioners of the Board of Parole:

We, the undersigned Federal, State, and local elected officials and leaders of civil rights organizations, write to urge the New York State Board of Parole ("Parole Board") to follow the law and parole guidelines and grant parole to Judith Clark.

During her 37 years in prison, Ms. Clark, through her words as well as her deeds, has transformed herself into a symbol of redemption, hope, and the human capacity for change. She has disavowed violence, accepted responsibility for her actions, and issued heartfelt and public apologies dating back to 1994 when parole was not even a remote possibility.

Ms. Clark participated in an unspeakable tragedy. Three people were killed, including two police officers. Although Ms. Clark was the "getaway" driver and did not fire any weapon, she does not minimize her role or in any way try to absolve herself from guilt. Judith Clark is painfully aware of the irrevocable harm she caused, and for more than three decades has done everything a human being could do to repair, repent and express remorse. She again forthrightly acknowledged her role, accepted responsibility, and expressed her contrition to the Parole Board at her initial appearance before the Board in April 2017.

Her many personal accomplishments are extraordinary, as is all that she has done working with and for prison administration and staff on behalf of others, including countless women incarcerated at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. She has been on the staff of the Nursery Program, where she has taught prenatal parenting classes for pregnant women. During the 1980s, to address the impact of the AIDS epidemic at Bedford Hills, Ms. Clark co-founded ACE, an organization that has been replicated at prisons across the country. Ms. Clark also helped to rebuild a prison college program when public funding was eliminated, and as a result more than 150 women have been awarded degrees. Ms. Clark now works in a special volunteer unit with the "Puppies

Behind Bars” program training puppies to become service dogs for law enforcement and disabled veterans.

Our correctional system no longer exists solely for retribution but also for rehabilitation. While parole can cause great pain to victims and their families, it is your role to hold open the door of mercy in appropriate circumstance -- meaning where there has been ample punishment, overwhelming proof of rehabilitation, acceptance of responsibility and genuine remorse. That is precisely Judith Clark’s situation: she is the second-longest serving female prisoner in New York, is considered the model example of rehabilitation, accepts full responsibility for her crime and has expressed her profound remorse for the last 25 years. If she is again denied parole, New York will have sent a profound message to all the other women and men in prison who strive to become better and transformed human beings: that they needn’t have bothered.

Elaine Lord, the highly regarded, long time former Superintendent at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility witnessed firsthand Judy’s transformation and wrote in 2018:

It is time for Judith Clark to be released. She has served a long sentence for her crime. She has come to terms with the harm she did. She has done everything possible to atone for that crime. She takes full responsibility for her role in the crime, understands how terrible it was, the agony and suffering it caused. No one needs to fear Judy Clark. Instead, she has much to offer society, and I believe she will do this with humility and wisdom, never forgetting the nature of her crime and the damage she caused, always acting in a way that will compensate, help, build, and sustain, whenever and wherever she can.

At age 69 and after 37 years in prison, Judith Clark is among the oldest and longest serving women in New York State prison (only one woman among the almost 2,400 currently incarcerated in New York has served longer than Ms. Clark). We ask that you consider who she is today in 2019, not who she was in 1981, and implore you to grant her release.

Respectfully,

Yvette Clark
Congress Member

Adriano Espaillat
Congress Member

Hakeem Jeffries
Congress Member

Carolyn Maloney
Congress Member

Gregory Meeks
Congress Member

Grace Meng
Congress Member

Jerrold Nadler
Congress Member

Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez
Congress Member

Jose Serrano
Congress Member

Nydia Velazquez
Congress Member

Tom Suozzi
Congress Member

Charles Rangel
Former Congress Member

David N. Dinkins
106th Mayor of New
York City

Scott Stringer
Comptroller

William Thompson
Former Comptroller

Jumaane Williams
Public Advocate

Betsy Gotbaum
Former Public Advocate

Mark Green
Former Public Advocate

Gale Brewer
Borough President

Melinda Katz
Borough President

Brad Hoylman
State Senator, Chairman of
Committee on Judiciary

Andrew Gournardes
State Senator

Robert Jackson
State Senator

Liz Krueger
State Senator

John Liu
State Senator

Zellnor Myrie
State Senator

Roxanne Persaud
State Senator

Jessica Ramos
State Senator

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State Senator

Julia Salazar
State Senator

Jose Serrano, Jr.
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Sonia Ossorio
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Elizabeth Holtzman
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Comptroller of New York
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