



YASMIN CORNELIUS for New York City Council District 9
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Yasmin H. Cornelius Campaign Captures Reverend Calvin O. Butts Endorsement

NEW YORK, NY – September 12, 2005 – The campaign of Yasmin H. Cornelius for New York City Council District 9, which has surged in recent weeks after endorsements by *The New York Times*, *New York Daily News*, Citizens Union, and New York State Assemblyman Adam Clayton Powell, has received the endorsement of the influential Reverend Calvin O. Butts III, senior pastor of the historic Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem.

“I have been very impressed by the decency, ability, and integrity of this woman of vision. I give Yasmin Cornelius my full support,” said Rev. Butts, praising Ms. Cornelius as the right leader for the future of the District. “I know our community will be well served by Yasmin.”

This landmark race for District 9 – representing communities in Harlem, the Upper West Side, and Morningside Heights – draws a deep dividing line between the Harlem of yesterday and today. Not since the days of Congressman Adam Clayton Powell Jr. have the stakes and expectations been so high. Ms. Cornelius distinguished herself early and often from the other seven candidates by riding an increasing wave of community support and capturing dozens of key endorsements including 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement, PRIDE Democrats, The League of Conservation Voters, and Kenyatta Punter, Chairman of the Greater Harlem Real Estate Board.

“Yasmin Cornelius is an outstanding leader . . .,” Mr. Punter said. “She understands the 9th Councilmanic District better than anyone and is truly the best person qualified to represent the people.”

As the current District Manager for Community Board 10, responsible for implementing policies to improve delivery of New York City services to Harlem and the Upper West Side, Ms. Cornelius practically already does the job for which she seeks to be elected. This latest vote of confidence from Rev. Butts is especially significant to Ms. Cornelius, whose campaign addresses specific housing, health, education and economic development issues.

“Rev. Butts is the senior minister in Harlem, and his stature is international. I look forward to working with him,” said Ms. Cornelius. “I’m feeling the momentum in the streets, in restaurants, in beauty parlors, wherever people are gathering. It’s very encouraging. I’m thankful that my record of accomplishment has been recognized with such warm and enthusiastic support.”

As District Manager, Ms. Cornelius spearheaded the recent completion of Community Board 10’s written document (197 A Plan) to establish a long-term community development plan for Harlem. A lifelong Harlem resident, wife, and mother, she is well known in Harlem and surrounding communities as an accomplished champion for the human struggle – parents’ rights, tenants’ rights, environmental justice, and economic development. She produces and co-hosts “Harlem 411,” a public access radio show on WHCR, Harlem Community Radio. She has worked for C. Virginia Fields from her stint as Councilwoman to Manhattan Borough President and served as Manhattan Coordinator on Ruth Messenger’s Mayoral Campaign. Ms. Cornelius is the past President of the Mid-Manhattan Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and previous 1st Vice President of Community School Board Three.

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YASMIN HIGHLIGHTS

Serving Central Harlem and the Upper West Side

- Spearheaded completion of Community Board 10's written document (197 A Plan) to establish a long-term community development plan for Harlem.
- As previous President of the Mid-Manhattan N.A.A.C.P. Branch, appointed several representatives to Judicial Screening Panels that resulted in the elections of progressive Supreme, Civil and Housing Court judges.
- Active participant in budget consultations regarding the city budget and Community Board 10's district needs.
- Advocated with local elected officials for District Three's year-round educational and budgetary needs while member of local Community School Board 3.
- Serve as Producer and Co-Host of "Harlem 411" which is a public access radio show broadcast on WHCR (Harlem Community Radio).
- Removed the bus lay-over zone on 117th Street, between 5th and Malcolm X Blvd., to allow for more residential parking.
- Responsible for removing "risque" billboard on 125th Street and Malcolm X Blvd.
- Developed Community Board 10's "How to Organize and Maintain a Block/Neighborhood Association" document.
- Co-founder of "Network of Concerned Agencies" to address youth development needs in and outside of Community Board 10.
- Served as Coordinator of Manhattan Borough President "Parent Power" Conventions.
- Established public/private partnership with Harlem Book Fair and the Rachel Robinson Lending Library.
- Coordinated clothing drive for Haitian refugees in Harlem.

ENDORSEMENT

(Excerpted)

The New York Times

August 21, 2005

Manhattan Council Endorsements

If there is a land of opportunity for aspiring politicians, it should be New York City, where a progressive public financing program and term limits combine to make it relatively easy for industrious hopefuls to become serious contenders. This year, more than 250 City Council candidates are vying for election - mainly in the Sept. 13 primaries, which are the contests that count in most districts. Here are our recommendations in the most hotly contested City Council district races in Manhattan. . . .

Ninth District (Central Harlem, parts of Morningside Heights, Upper West Side and East Harlem): For dramatic change, it's hard to beat this district. Revitalization stretches from end to end, but not all boats are being lifted. Pockets of the area are among the poorest in the city. Health care lags. Longtime residents are increasingly priced out of their neighborhoods. The candidate to beat here is Inez Dickens, a local party leader and the daughter of a former assemblyman, Lloyd Dickens. She has raised prodigious amounts of campaign cash and has the backing of a host of elected party officials and local clubs. She is the insider in a district that needs something else - like a strong advocate and smart outsider who can help the area cope with the waves of housing development. Better candidates include Virginia Montague, a longtime aide to the borough president, C. Virginia Fields, and Cynthia Doty, who has organized successful efforts to get services in the district and has real passion for change.

But Yasmin Cornelius, the district manager for Community Board 10, stands out as the candidate who could best bridge the divide between Harlem and Morningside Heights. Ms. Cornelius is particularly passionate about the problems of the area's many renters, but seems able to work with developers rather than simply fighting inevitable housing expansion. The district's current council member, Bill Perkins, has said that his successor needs to be engaged with people on the street. Ms. Cornelius, who has a local radio talk show, has the goods to get the job done. Our endorsement goes to Yasmin Cornelius.

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IN THE NEWS

DAILY NEWS

Ideas & Opinions

Six winners for City Council

Editorials

Voters in six City Council districts in Manhattan and the Bronx have the chance tomorrow to choose candidates to replace their representatives in City Hall. In five of those districts, Council members have to vacate their positions because of term limits; in the sixth, the incumbent is leaving to run for higher office. The Daily News endorses these Democratic primary candidates.

DISTRICT 2, lower East Side, Murray Hill, Gramercy and Alphabet City: Gur Tsabar stands out in the crowd competing to replace Councilwoman Margarita Lopez.

Tsabar, an aide to Council Speaker Gifford Miller, has emphasized service and integrity. His campaign activities included collecting books for a school read-a-thon, cell phones for senior citizens and clothing for the poor. He also has given campaign donations to charity, and he cried foul first and loudest when rival Rosie Mendez used heavy-handed legal tactics to knock other candidates off the ballot.

DISTRICT 4, upper East Side, Murray Hill and Stuyvesant Town: Jack Lester has the needed mixture of smarts, know-how and independence to replace Eva Moskowitz. As a lawyer for tenants tangling with landlords and for community groups fighting overdevelopment, Lester makes his living fighting for district residents. He backed Rudy Giuliani for mayor and shows a Giuliani-like disdain for special-interest politics. In particular, he supported Moskowitz's stand against provisions of the teachers' contract that protect union members at the expense of good education.

DISTRICT 5, upper East Side and Roosevelt Island: Voters have a chance to reject politics as usual and elect a candidate who never fails to tell the truth as he sees it: **George Spitz**. The 82-year-old retired state auditor and World War II veteran is making his 10th and, he says, last run for public office.

The News supported him in 1997, when he ran for Manhattan borough president on a platform of abolishing the office as a waste of time and money. Eight years later, he shows the same honesty and willingness to talk about issues others won't touch, such as ending government contracts for pols' cronies. Pipe dreams? Maybe. But so was his idea of a New York City Marathon - until it became a reality. The Council could use more of Spitz's big ideas.

DISTRICT 8, upper West Side and East Harlem, as well as Mott Haven and Port Morris in

the Bronx: Longtime Community Board 7 chairwoman **Joyce Johnson** is the best-qualified candidate to replace Councilman Phil Reed in this diverse district. She has spent years tackling grass-roots issues and, as a charter school administrator, understands the challenges facing teachers, principals and students. Before entering public life, she was a trailblazer in the business world: Johnson climbed the corporate ladder at Seagram at a time when there were few black or female managers.

Her main rival, Melissa Mark Viverito, also is a hard worker with a long résumé. But her roots extend too deep into the powerful health care workers' union Local 1199. Not only is she backed by the union's potent political machine, she works for 1199, too. The union has enough political influence without getting its own Council vote.

DISTRICT 9, central Harlem: Yasmin Cornelius, district manager of Community Board 10, has the skill and energy to represent her neighborhood during a time of great transition. As hotels, chain stores and young professionals have moved uptown, she has refereed competing interests, protecting Harlem's cultural flavor while supporting economic development.

Principal rival Inez Dickens is a real estate broker and a longtime political operative linked to traditional Harlem powerbrokers. The neighborhood would be better served by the youth, freshness and independence of Cornelius.

DISTRICT 13, Morris Park, Pelham Bay, Throgs Neck and City Island: Because of his community roots and lifetime of neighborhood involvement, **James Vacca** stands out in the race to succeed Madeline Provenzano. Having served as district manager of Community Board 10 for 25 years, Vacca has long monitored city agencies and brought together civic associations, residents and business owners to solve problems. Vacca, who teaches urban studies at Queens College, also gets a star for supporting Mayor Bloomberg's retention policies for struggling children in grades three, five and seven.

His main opponent is former Assemblyman Stephen Kaufman, a councilman from 1974 to 1982 who ran for state Senate last year and seems addicted to seeking political office. In contrast, Vacca vows not to run for any other post and favors term limits. He will bring some much-needed energy and commitment to the Council.

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