

Harlem's Yasmin H. Cornelius Declares Candidacy for Historic New York City Council Race

Flanked by more than 250 supporters, community residents, and curious onlookers gathered at Harlem's famed 125th Street and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard, Yasmin H. Cornelius today officially declared her intention to become the next New York City Council member representing District 9.

New York, NY (PRWEB) June 5, 2005 — Flanked by more than 250 supporters, community residents, and curious onlookers gathered at Harlem's famed 125th Street and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard, Yasmin H. Cornelius Thursday officially declared her intention to become the next New York City Council member representing District 9.

"It's no mistake why we're here in this specific spot today. Behind me is a statue of one of the most fearless champions of all people – Congressman Adam Clayton Powell Jr.," Yasmin said amid sunshine, pulsating African drums, festive music, and cheers from the crowd shouting her name while waiving red, white and blue campaign signs.

"It's not just a statue. As a child, I used to get an overwhelming sensation as I stood on this corner, and I feel it now. Adam would have loved this fight, because he understood that this office belongs to the people. You've got to come from behind that desk. You have to listen and talk to people. You've got to go to supermarkets, housing developments, day care centers, train stops – you've got to work! So together on September 13th when we win, and I go to City Hall to be your voice, that's the real fight," said Yasmin, who cited serious issues related to health, housing, education, and economic development as priorities.

"Work" indeed was the theme of the day. After the announcement, Yasmin, her campaign team, and supporters took to the streets greeting people in the district at stops which included the subway station at 135th Street and Malcolm X Boulevard and lunch at Flor de Mayo on the upper west side.

Yasmin's supporters praise her as a candidate with strong convictions who can get things done rather than make empty promises. "Who is better and more equipped, principled and more designed to be what we need at City Hall?" asked John Bess, founder of The Valley Inc. "She has fought all of her life for the good of Harlem. She can represent uptown and make sure that downtown responds to uptown!"

Betti Jean Miller, president and founder of Harlem Gateway Committee calls Yasmin "knowledgeable about all of the concerns we have here" in Harlem. The fact that she has been with Community Board 10 makes it even more reason why she is alert about what needs to be done in the community," Ms. Miller said.

Yasmin's influence impacts community members across socio-economic and racial lines. "I moved into Harlem four years ago with my wife and three boys. There is no other community in Manhattan that's like this at all," said Bill Rohlfing, a real estate developer rebuilding townhouses in Harlem and elected president of the 100 Block Association of West 118th Street. "I had the ear of someone at Community Board 10 who listened, and that's Yasmin. Since I met her, the doors started to open. We used to have prostitution on our block, and with Yasmin's help, we got rid of that. We had drugs coming in, but with a little force on the police and Yasmin's ear, that's gone too!"

"Yasmin represents new, young, energetic leadership," said Carl Redding, owner of Amy Ruth's Restaurant,

where a dinner entrée is named for Yasmin. “She has been a friend of this community for many years. I know we’re all going to get our neighbors to come out and vote. The majority of the residents in my building are coming out to support Yasmin.”

Dubbed “history’s daughter” and “destiny’s child” by some supporters, Yasmin emerges from a family with generations of political and social activism. “Whether or not you have ever voted before, it is important that you exercise your right to vote,” Azeeza Hurston, mother of the candidate and community activist, told the crowd. “When you vote, vote for Yasmin. She needs your support, your blessings, and your prayers.”

“We are at that moment when one of our own will step forward and embody a new era of leadership in Harlem, an era empowered by young people who’ve been raised, inspired, and guided by their elders,” said Al Hajj Imam Talib Abdur-Rashid of the Mosque of Islamic Brotherhood.

“I’ve come into my right as a leader and a servant, and I’ve been on this journey for a long time,” said Yasmin, who, at 33, wants her experience to speak to her readiness to be elected to City Hall.

A lifelong Harlem resident, wife, and mother, Yasmin is the District Manager for Community Board 10, responsible for implementing policies to improve delivery of City services to the district. As District Manager she spearheaded the recent completion of Community Board 10’s written document (197 A Plan) to establish a long-term community development plan for Harlem. 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, just to name a few. 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 Messinger’s Mayoral Campaign. Yasmin 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.

PHOTO CAPTIONS

1. Yasmin H. Cornelius at her New York City Council District 9 candidacy announcement receives a warm handshake from Rev. Dr. Calvin Butts, pastor, Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem. Standing (left to right) Rev. Jacques A. De Graff, Canaan Baptist Church in Harlem; Tchiyuka Cornelius, husband of the candidate; Walter Edwards, chairman, Harlem Business Alliance; and John Bess, founder, The Valley Inc. (Photo credit: Bill Moore)

2. Yasmin H. Cornelius at her New York City Council District 9 candidacy announcement, poised in front of the statue of the late, great Congressman Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., as she stands prepared for a new era of leadership. To her right are Al-Hajj Imam Talib Abdur-Rashid, Mosque of Islamic Brotherhood; and Azeeza Hurston, mother of the candidate and community activist. (Photo credit: Bill Moore)

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