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****Press Release****

Jersey City Dedicates Main Public Library in Honor of Longtime Director Priscilla Gardner

First African American Library Director in City History to Receive High Honor

JERSEY CITY – Mayor Steven M. Fulop announces the renaming of the Jersey City Free Public Library's Main Library building in honor of longtime **Library Director, Priscilla Gardner**, who is retiring after 50 years of service. The Main Library located at 427 Jersey Avenue will be named the Priscilla Gardner Main Library *on September 16, 2019 at an 11 a.m. ceremony.*

“After 50 years of dedicated and meaningful service to our City, it is fitting that the main library be named in honor of Priscilla and all of her hard work,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “The Jersey City Free Public Library is a valuable resource in our community, and Priscilla created a community that opened doors for people who may not otherwise have had access to books and other educational resources. The impact she has made on our City will last a lifetime.”

Having most recently served as Library Director, Ms. Gardner began her career as a Junior Library Assistant in 1969. She became the Library’s first African American Director in 2002. She spent 30 years working at Miller Branch Library, serving as Branch Head there from 1987-1999.

“While I am beyond grateful the Mayor has chosen to recognize me, I simply worked to serve as the best Library Director for our community and never imagined being recognized in this way,” said **Priscilla Gardner**. “I am excited to start this new chapter in my life, but am also thankful for the change we have been able to create in Jersey City. It is my hope that the work I started lives on, and the Jersey City community continues to have endless access to free resources through the Jersey City Free Public Library.”

Ms. Gardner established the Jersey City Free Public Library Foundation in 2004 to raise funds for capital improvements to the Library and to support Library services and programs. Under Gardner’s leadership, the Foundation made critical contributions to the Library, expanding the resources offered to Jersey City residents.

"I am happy to see Priscilla Gardner receiving this honor for her 50 years of dedicated service to the public library and Jersey City," said **Senator Sandra Cunningham**. "I am sure Glenn is beaming with pride for his adopted sister."

“Priscilla Gardner has given a lifetime of service to the Jersey City Free Public Library,” said **Jersey City Free Public Library (JCFPL) Board of Trustees President Curt Harris**. “We have been so lucky to have such a dedicated person in this role for so long, and she has accomplished so much in her tenure. Priscilla’s staunch

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advocacy for the Library and the Foundation has established the basis for her eventual successor to continue her legacy and to take the JCFPL to new heights.”

Gardner ensured every resident of Jersey City had full access to all of the JCFPL’s free resources. Notably, as a result of her ongoing Library Card Drive, the number of cardholders has risen from 30,000 in 2002 to more than 246,000 today.

“Priscilla Gardner is an inspiration to us all,” said **Councilwoman at Large Joyce Watterman**. “She has remained fully dedicated for the last 50 years, and her decades of service will forever be embedded in the fabric of the City’s history.”

Jersey City has set forth on a national search for a new public Library Director. The new Library Director will oversee the historic Main Library on Jersey Avenue, as well as six regional branches, three neighborhood branches and a Bookmobile, with a wide variety of programming for children and adults.

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