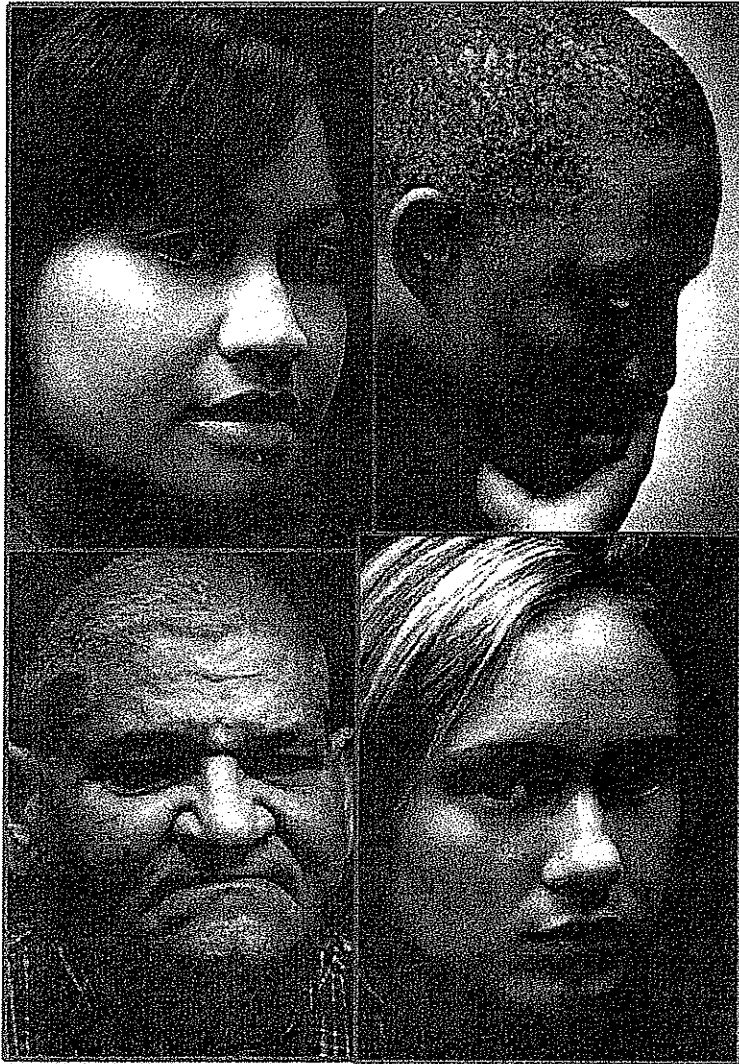


# PROVIDENCE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

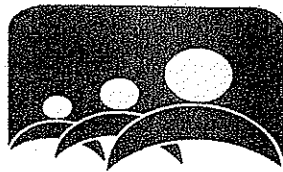


## 2009 ANNUAL REPORT

MAYOR DAVID N. CICILLINE  
PROVIDENCE THE CREATIVE CAPITAL

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The Honorable David N. Cicilline  
Mayor, City of Providence

The Honorable Members of the Providence City Council

Dear Mayor Cicilline and Members of the City Council:

We respectfully submit the Annual Report for the Providence Human Relations Commission (PHRC) for FY 2008-2009, pursuant to Section 16-64 (K) of the Anti-Discrimination Ordinance. This report emphasizes the vital work that PHRC has done in the last year.

One of the City of Providence's strength is its tremendous wealth of diversity. As a result, we need to work together to enhance our values and attitudes towards this diversity. The goal is to create a culture of tolerance and acceptance of our neighbors, co-workers, employees, tenants or anyone whose opinions and values are different from our own. In this context, PHRC plays an important role in our City to protect individuals from discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodations, education and credit status.

PHRC continues to vigorously process complaints of discrimination and foster mutual understanding through our outreach & education curriculum. The purpose of our outreach and education program is to coordinate workshops and seminars quarterly.

The Commission and its staff remain dedicated to achieve our mission as we prevent and eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote justice, equality and respect among all residents of the City of Providence. The purpose of this report is to share with you the Commission's accomplishments and activities for this fiscal year.

We thank you for your continued support and leadership in this effort, including the allocation of the necessary funds to carry out our mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "S. Ann Keefe".

Sister Ann Keefe  
Vice-Chair

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Melba Depeña".

Melba Depeña  
Executive Director

## INTRODUCTION

The practice or policy of discrimination against individuals because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, marital status, disability, age or country of ancestral origin, is a serious concern for the city of Providence. Such discrimination threatens the welfare of our citizens as it lessens their standard of living, reduces their ability to provide for their families, and undermines our ability to thrive as a diverse city. The PHRC strives to safeguard the rights of Providence residents to be free from discrimination, and works to foster a climate of respect for the many diverse communities that make our city strong.

**The mission of the PHRC is twofold:**

- To seek, investigate, mediate and/or adjudicate complaints of discrimination filed with the Commission and promote compliance with civil rights law.
- To promote, facilitate, and foster positive relationships among and between the diverse groups and communities within the city of Providence through outreach, education, training and community building activities.

This year has been an exciting year of growth and development for the PHRC, as the staff has worked diligently to fulfill its critical mission of reducing discrimination and improving community relations in the City of Providence. PHRC heard and adjudicated complaints of civil rights violations, and provided education and training to the community on a wide range of civil rights-related topics. Even with limited staff, the number of new cases filed with the Commission during this fiscal year was 42. In addition the Commission successfully resolved 12 new allegations of discrimination through mediation. Mediation interventions sometimes offer a resolution without the necessity of filing a complaint. In addition, the PHRC staff provides valuable service for the residents of Providence by responding to all inquiries (over 200 phone calls) from the public and referring non-jurisdictional cases.

What follows in this report are specifics about the work of the Commission including its work hearing complaints, providing educational workshops, outreaching to the community, and building organizational infrastructure.

## COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF

*Established in 1963, the Providence Human Relations Commission investigates complaints of alleged discrimination in housing, employment, credit, education, and public accommodations, and promotes understanding among the City's diverse populations. If you feel you have been discriminated against because of your race, color, religion, age, gender, physical or mental disability, familial status, sexual orientation, nationality, or marital status please contact:*

### COMMISSIONERS

Sister Ann Keefe  
PHRC Vice Chairperson  
Saint Michael's Church

Maria Alvarado  
Guatemalan Association of RI

Wendy Becker  
Rhode Island College

Everett Brooks  
Johnson & Wales University

Kenneth Brown  
Community Activist

Marilyn Cepeda-Sánchez  
Access Employment of RI

Sister Angela Daniels, C.P.  
Assumption Church

Mary Dean  
Retired

Padee Thao  
GTECH Corporation

Raymond Watson  
Mt. Hope Neighborhood Association

Donna Williams  
Housing Network of RI

### STAFF

Melba Depena  
Executive Director

Janette Thomas  
Investigator

Wanda Escobedo  
Secretary

Olajumoke Akinrolabu, Esq.  
Legal Counsel  
Law Department

**Special Thanks to:**  
Thomas P. Whitten and  
Bishop Robert E. Farrow  
who also served as  
Commissioners during this  
fiscal year.

## INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*In order to achieve the goal of the Commission more effectively, the staff was involved in numerous trainings over the course of the year.*

### EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION (EEOC)

Boston Area Office  
JFK Federal Building, Boston, MA

Entire PHRC staff attended this training

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is a federal agency responsible for enforcing employment discrimination laws. The Training Institute provides a variety of training to commissions to help them understand, and correct discrimination in the workplace. The training offered insightful and practical theories of discrimination, investigative interview, investigative techniques, circumstantial evidence, documentary evidence, testimony and review of federal laws.

### Other Trainings:

- *Coalition of Human Rights Commissions--Fall Meeting*
- *EEOC Regional, State and Local Conference*
- *Introduction to Media and Communications*
- *Clarifying Your Mission, Vision and Purpose*
- *Financial Management*

## ADJUDICATION OF COMPLAINTS

Any person aggrieved by an unlawful practice in violation of federal and state law covered under the city's anti-discrimination ordinance may contact the Providence Human Relations Commission (PHRC) to file a petition. The Commission will commence an investigation after a petition has been completed and signed.

- When a complainant contacts the PHRC about an alleged discrimination, an intake form is completed by the administrative assistant.
- The intake form is then submitted to the PHRC investigator. The investigator meets with the complainant to discuss the case, get information, and explain the investigation & complaint process.
- The Executive Director then determines whether the case meets all of the requirements of the city's anti-discrimination ordinance. (Chapter 16, Article II Discrimination)
- If the case does not meet all of the requirements, the investigator may offer a mediation option or refer the complainant to another agency.
- If the case meets all requirements, a petition form is completed and signed by the complainant. Then the petition will be assigned a case number.
- The Executive Director notifies the respondent of the charge and respondent is asked for a written response.
- Thereafter, an investigation takes place, which may include fact finding meetings, site visits and interviews of all relevant parties/witnesses. Subpoenas may be issued by city council if necessary.
- At the conclusion of an investigation, the Commission will determine whether it is probable that an unlawful practice has been or is being engaged in by respondent. If so, the commission must attempt to encourage voluntary compliance with the city's anti-discrimination ordinance.
- If PHRC determines that probable cause does not exist to credit a charge of discrimination a notice will be sent to the complainant closing the case. The complainant may present additional evidence for reconsideration.
- If PHRC fails to effect the elimination of unlawful practice and to obtain voluntary compliance with the city's anti-discrimination ordinance the Commission may file a complaint and schedule a formal hearing.

**FY 2009 STATISTICS**

**Overview of Status Disposition and Status of Complaints**

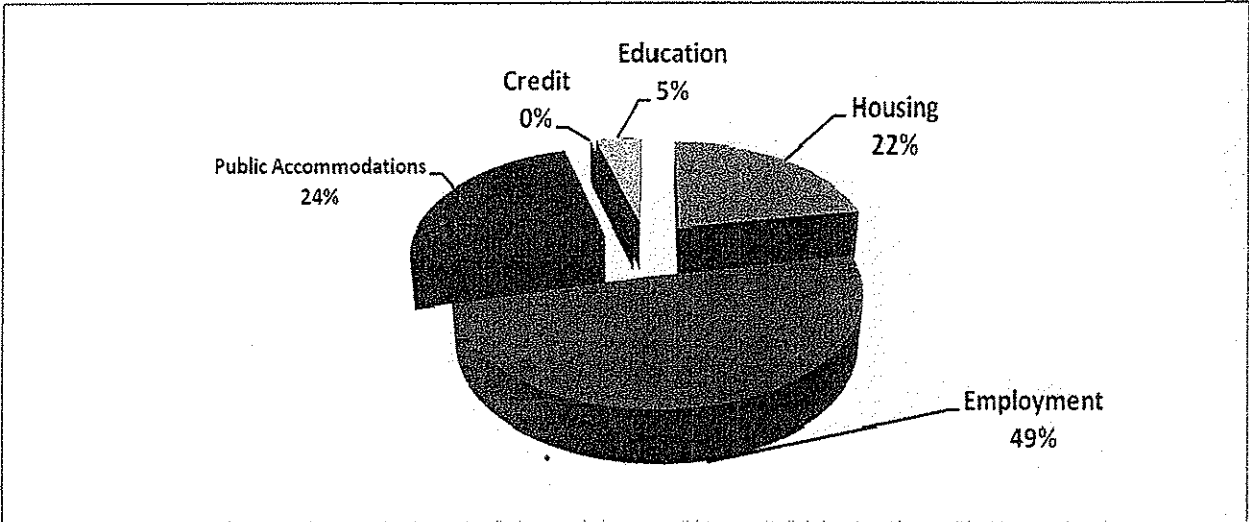
Type	Number of Cases
Probable Cause	1
No Probable Cause	10
Out of Jurisdiction	4
Mediation	12
Withdrawal	1
Settlement	2
Open	8
Referred	6



OVERVIEW OF COMPLAINTS FILED FY 2009

Area	Race/ Ethnicity	Religion	Disability	Age	Marital Status	Gender Identity	Sexual Orientation
Employment	14		5	1		1	1
Housing	4		2			1	
Public Accommodations	3		7				
Credit							
Education			1	1			

PERCENTAGE OF CASES BY DISCRIMINATION AREAS



## SELECTED CASES

The following are case example of what the PHRC has investigated during the year. It as been a motivating second year with numerous cases from all walks of life. In order to preserve confidentiality, identifying information was omitted from the actual case.

- The complainant is a young Latino man alleged he was a victim of employment discrimination based on disability. Employed as a line cook, a position he loved, many times working over 40 hours a week constantly covering for co-workers, even working seven days consecutively. About six months into his job he became ill. He later found out he had contracted a very serious disease but one that would not interfere with his duty as a line cook. His doctor determined that to stabilize his health he needed to take two weeks off work. When the complainant asked the company for the time off he also informed them of his disease, they denied his request and terminated him.
- The complainant is an elder African American male alleged was victim of housing discrimination because he was disabled and African American. He claimed that the housing complex where he resides refused to make changes in his apartment to accommodate his disability. He was requesting a wider bathroom and kitchen, in order to fit his wheelchair around his apartment. During our investigation, we found that the Apartment Complex was in fact in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The man has received the services he requested and now lives in a newer handicapped accessible apartment.
- The complainant is an older Latino couple alleged they were victims of age discrimination. The couple went to a local adult literacy class to learn basic English. After completing the first half of the course they were not contacted to be part of the second phase. After waiting a few weeks they decided to contact the program director to enquire about the class. When PHRC contacted the Agency, they realized that they had made a mistake by not contacting the couple; they attributed the oversight to the fact that they were understaffed and had a long list of people waiting to take different class.

## OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

This year, PHRC worked decisively to increase its educational outreach program. The goal is to provide free, quarterly workshops and seminars to the general public about issues related to inter-group relations, civil rights and human relations as well as the discrimination areas the PHRC investigates.



*Thomas P. Whitten*



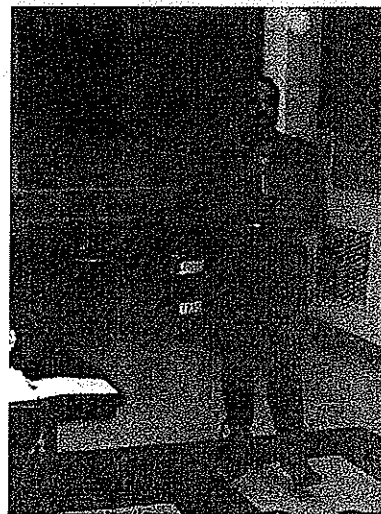
*Wendy Becker*



**PHRC**  
PROVIDENCE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION



*Joe Fowlkes, Tom Whitten and Cliff Monteiro*



*Olayinka Oredugba*

### ***Training for Landlords:***

Fair Housing Training For Landlords  
August 28, 2008



*Janette Thomas, Beatriz Perez and Wanda Escobedo attended the training.*

This event was designed to inform new landlords about state and federal fair housing laws. The topics covered during this workshop were: defining fair housing, who is protected by the law, the proper way to select tenants, lead inspections and other safety issues that are important for landlords to keep in mind. Approximately 50 landlords attended.

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### **Community Forum, September 25, 2008**

The Foreclosure Crisis

**Panel:** Silvia Acevedo, Esdras Inirio and Emelda Benitez.



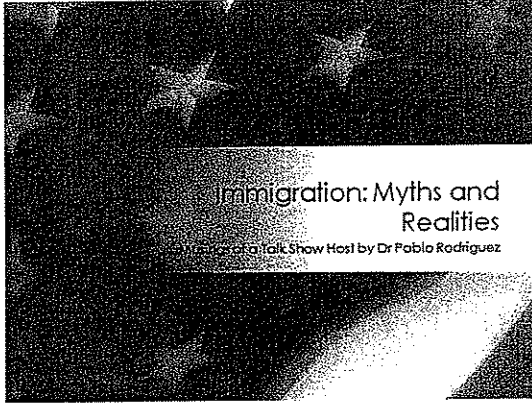
*Partial view of landlords who attended the workshop.*

This event was designed to provide information about foreclosures to Spanish speaking homeowners. We coordinated a panel of 4 HUD trained foreclosure counselors who presented their information in Spanish. The topics covered address the foreclosures process, the possibility of loan modification, how to avoid foreclosure and how and where to seek assistance. Approximately 180 people attended this event.

## **Community Breakfast, October 22, 2008**

The Immigration Conversation

**Guest Speaker: Dr. Pablo Rodriguez**



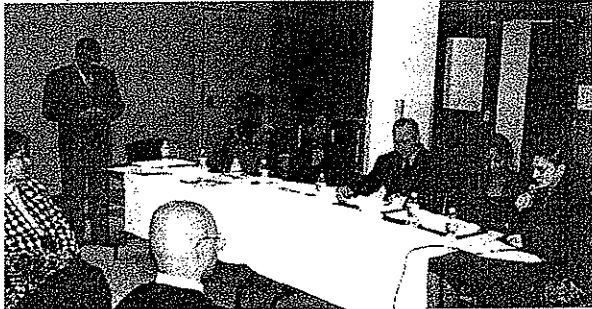
The purpose of this forum was to explore the causes, benefits, challenges and impact of immigration. PHRC believes that it is important to begin a dialogue about immigration and to examine ways in which we can work together on this issue. PHRC collected written responses to the questions posted during the discussion and issued a report as a result of this event. The report was disseminated to the community including the recommendations that were discussed among attendees. If you would like a copy of this report, please call our office at 351-0475. Approximately 90 people were present. This event was broadcasted simultaneously on the air in Spanish by Latino Public Radio.

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## **Community Luncheon, February 19, 2009**

Forum: Improving Race Relations in Providence

**Panel:** Joseph Fowlkes, Victor Mendoza, Olayinka Oredugba; Hanna Resseger, and Molly Soum. Event moderated by Dennis Langley.

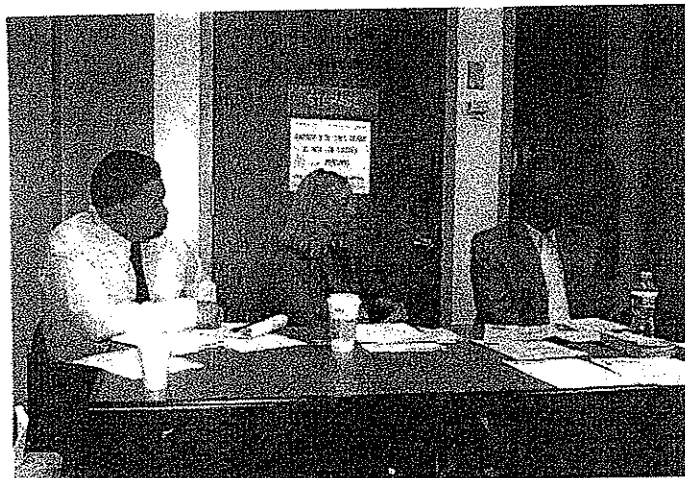


*Panel and moderator*

Subsequent to the election of President Obama, there has been much discussion about what the election of the first African American president means to race relations and racial equality in the United States. In this context, community leaders and Providence residents gathered to discuss how race relations can be improved in the City of Providence. The purpose of this workshop was to take advantage of that renewed sense of hope with regards to racial justice in the hopes of seizing the opportunity to establish a dialogue and bring more attention to this important and challenging topic. More than 100 people attended this forum.

**Community Breakfast, April 28, 2009**  
**Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation**

**Panel:** Dr. Toby Ayers, Mr. Rodney Davis and Pastor Matthew Kai.  
**Moderated by** Commissioner Wendy Becker



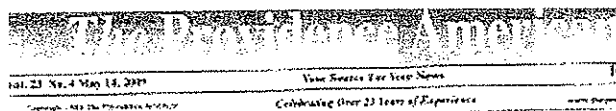
Mr. Rodney Davis, Dr. Toby Ayers and Pastor Matthew Kai.

This workshop explored the question if sexual orientation issues fit in the civil rights agenda. The following issues were addressed: full equality for gay, bisexual and lesbians, equal marriage rights for same sex couples, the role of religious groups who advocate for civil rights, and how can we help set an agenda that protects everyone's civil and human rights. Approximately 60 people attendance.

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## **Call the Providence Human Relations Commission for 2010 Trainings and Workshops.**





PROVIDENCE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION  
**Hosts Community Breakfast**

[illegible]

These two members from the Council were awarded the highest honor and were elected to the top positions of the National Association of Broadcasters and National Public Radio, respectively. As a former policy maker of the FCC, it was a privilege for me to know these two gentlemen.

During the past few years, the American Bar Association has been very active in the area of public interest law. The American Bar Association has been very active in the area of public interest law. The American Bar Association has been very active in the area of public interest law.



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# Ejecuciones hipotecarias

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ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN OTHERWISE

progrados notables en materia de salud pública que ha permitido salvar vidas humanas a través de estrategias de intervención. Desde finales de los años ochenta, el Ministerio de Salud ha impulsado programas de vacunación de alta cobertura, campañas de saneamiento, tratamiento de aguas residuales, y fortalecimiento de la atención primaria de salud.

«...después de haber estado en la escuela, la familia de la madre de Rodríguez. Unos días y un día después me presenté en la escuela en un momento de la clase, que la profesora argumenta a los tres para hacerlos ser en la escuela».

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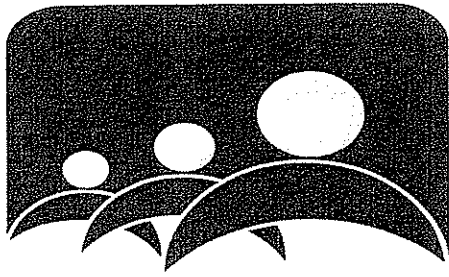
gastar, reconhecer que a situação para todos é precária. E os resultados da luta e a questão de se reformular o período de greve.

Se o grupo decide a não fazer reuniões no México, há que se lembrar de que, por exemplo, a 12.ª IEL e a 13.ª passaram a ser reuniões que foram realizadas apenas durante o período de greve. E isso não é bom, porque não há possibilidade de se fazer reuniões fora do período de greve. E isso não é bom, porque não há possibilidade de se fazer reuniões fora do período de greve.

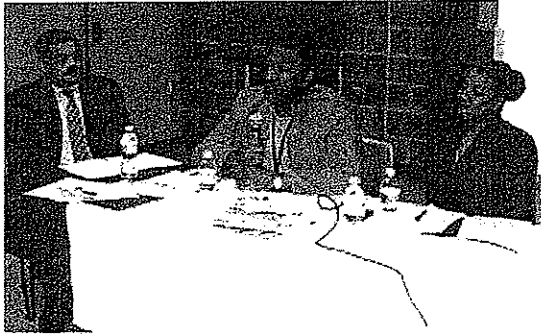


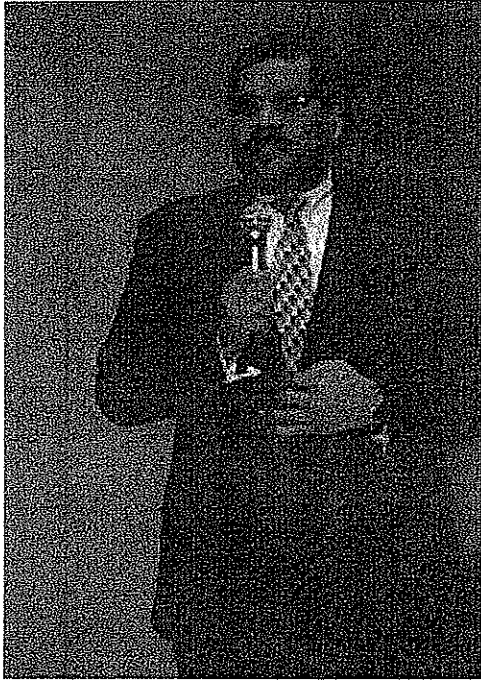
•  $\lim_{x \rightarrow 0} \frac{1}{x} = \infty$  (the limit does not exist)



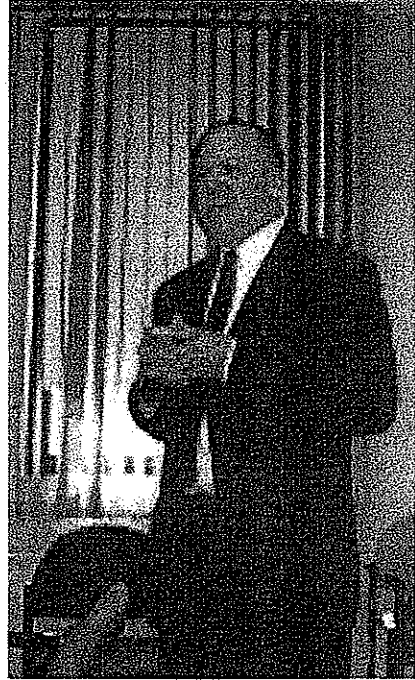


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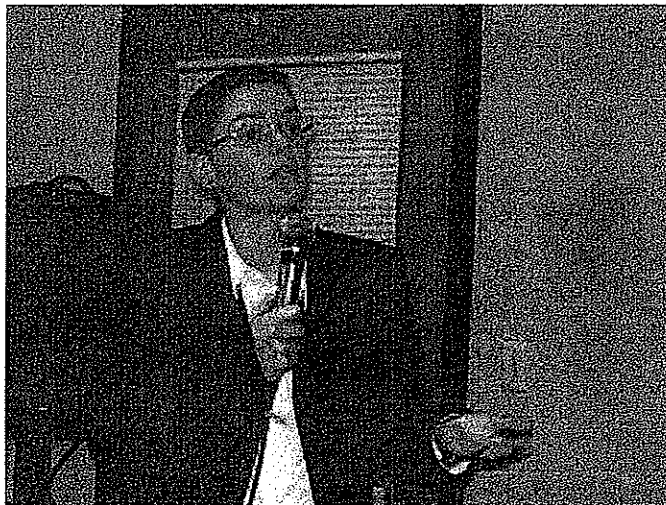




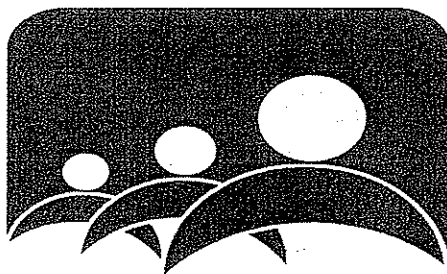
*Dennis Langley*



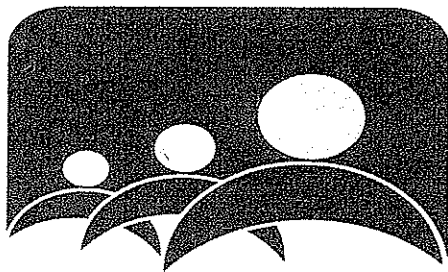
*Victor Mendoza*



*Michelle Duso*



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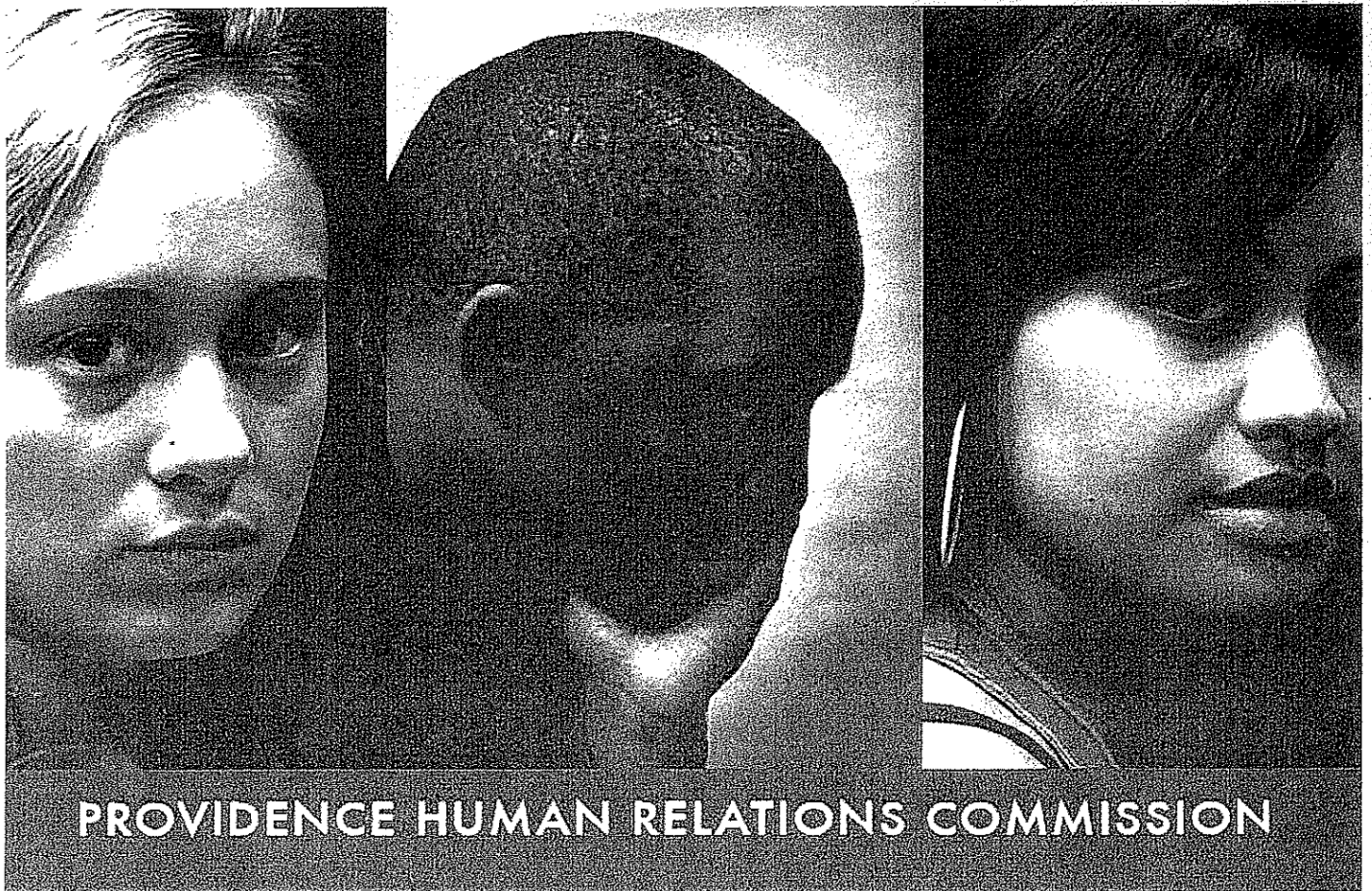
**400 Westminster Street**

**Providence, RI 02903**

**401-351-0475 (voice)**

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## PROVIDENCE HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Established in 1963, The Providence Human Relations Commission investigates complaints of alleged discrimination in housing, employment, education and public accomodatioin, while promoting understanding among the City's diverse population.

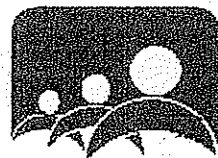
If you feel you have been discriminated against because of your race, color, religion, age, gender, physical or mental disability, familial status, sexual orientation/gender identity, country of origin or marital status please contact us.

Discrimination is illegal...  
(401) 351-0475

**P**

David N. Cicilline  
Mayor

Melba Depeña  
Executive Director



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