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### **Ebony Jones Statement Regarding Kandynce Jones & Donald Sterling**

Most daughters love their mothers. Few are so inspired by their mother's fight for justice that they feel compelled to carry it on, even after their mother's death. I am one of those lucky few. My name is Ebony Jones, and my inspiration is Kandynce Jones, my mother.

At the time Donald Sterling bought the building in which my mother had lived for 8 years – 445 S. Ardmore Ave. in Los Angeles California – she was 66 and by then legally blind, but even before she became legally blind, my mother did not see race. She saw, heard and related to people as people. Her message was clear: look at a person's conduct, not the color of their skin, or kink of their hair. She had been a professional hair-stylist who worked with all races every day of her professional life, and won an award from Vidal Sassoon for hair cutting.

By the time Mr. Sterling acquired her building in 2002, my mother was also paralyzed on her right side because of a botched spinal fusion. This left her permanently bent over in favor of her right side. She couldn't walk without great difficulty. She also suffered from sickle cell anemia and high blood pressure. I never heard her complain about any of those conditions. She was, in spite of her disabilities, a positive person, thankful for each day on earth.

Because she was blind and couldn't really get out on account of her paralysis, the apartment was more than a home. She could feel her way around its familiar rooms, furniture and objects, without needing to see, in comfort and safety. She passed almost all her waking hours in that apartment. It was her sanctuary.

When Mr. Sterling took over the building my mother lived in Apartment 121. Neighbors who knew my mother saw her as a quiet, blind, retired hair-stylist who could barely walk. According to testimony of Sumner Davenport, the building's manager, as reported by ESPN, the Huffington Post, NPR and others, what Mr. Sterling saw, however, was "one

of those black people that stink.” Mr. Sterling wanted African-Americans like my mother out, so they could be replaced by “tenants that fit his image,” according to coverage of Ms. Davenport’s testimony, including in ESPN, Sports Illustrated and Deadspin.

Ms. Davenport introduced herself to my mother, and a week later, my mother was asked to leave the building. No reason was given. None could have been offered. Kandynce Jones had always paid her rent on time. Her apartment was neat, clean and well maintained.

When things broke in her apartment, my mother first asked and then pled for the broken facilities to be repaired. To do this, she repeatedly made what was a difficult trip for her to the Manager’s office, where Ms. Davenport listened but nothing was done. I also requested that these repairs be made many times, including by calling Mr. Sterling’s office. Mr. Sterling refused to do anything.

The needed repairs were not minor. First the stove failed. Next the icebox. The dishwasher stopped working. Then the toilet broke. Still Mr. Sterling did nothing. My mother and I were literally forced to dispose of her own feces by hand. It seemed to my mother that Mr. Sterling tried to make the conditions in her apartment so disgusting that she would break down and move. When the elevator in front of my mother’s apartment also went out, Mr. Sterling still did nothing, forcing my half-paralyzed mother to climb stairs at her own risk.

Finally, construction work at the Ardmore building caused massive flooding of my mother’s apartment. I rushed to Apartment 121 where I found her totally distraught and disoriented, standing in several inches of water, as familiar objects whose places she knew by heart floated by.

My mother asked to be reimbursed for her lost property. Mr. Sterling’s response, according to Ms. Davenport’s testimony as reported in numerous news sources such as ESPN, NPR, and The Huffington Post was: “Just evict the bitch.”

Because of the flooding and Mr. Sterling’s unwillingness to clean it up, fungus quickly spread throughout my mother’s apartment. The stink of mold filled the place. Her one time sanctuary was turning into an uninhabitable cage. I can recall being down on hands and knees month after

month trying to scrub away the grey fungus that grew like mushrooms, to wipe away the stench of the flood waters. According to Ms. Davenport, as reported by multiple news sources like ESPN, NPR, and The Huffington Post, Mr. Sterling considers blacks “not clean.” Could Mr. Sterling remain clean if he lived in a home with no working stove, dishwasher, icebox, or sink, while he daily carried his own excrement out in tissue paper and plastic bags?

Mr. Sterling may have thought he saw a little, old black lady he could drive away out of Apartment 121, but what he didn't see by looking only at the color of my mother's skin was the quality of her character: Kandynce Jones was a fighter. She first reported the living conditions at the Ardmore apartments to the Housing Rights Center. Then she began to help organize tenants to fight for their civil rights. Over the course of the next several months, my mother helped bring together eighteen other tenants to take action against one of the most powerful men in Los Angeles. Their suit was filed in early 2003 and became her way of answering those who sought to tell her she was not good enough to live somewhere just because of her race. In the process, she became more than just my mother. She became an inspiration and a civil rights hero.

Kandynce Jones died during her fight for justice on July 21, 2003. I continued in her place, finishing the depositions she could not, prosecuting and ultimately concluding the case in her stead. This is my remembrance of her. My hope is that my mother's life and her fight against racism serve as an inspiration not only to me and the others who knew her, but also to anyone else who needs the courage to stand-up to Donald Sterling.