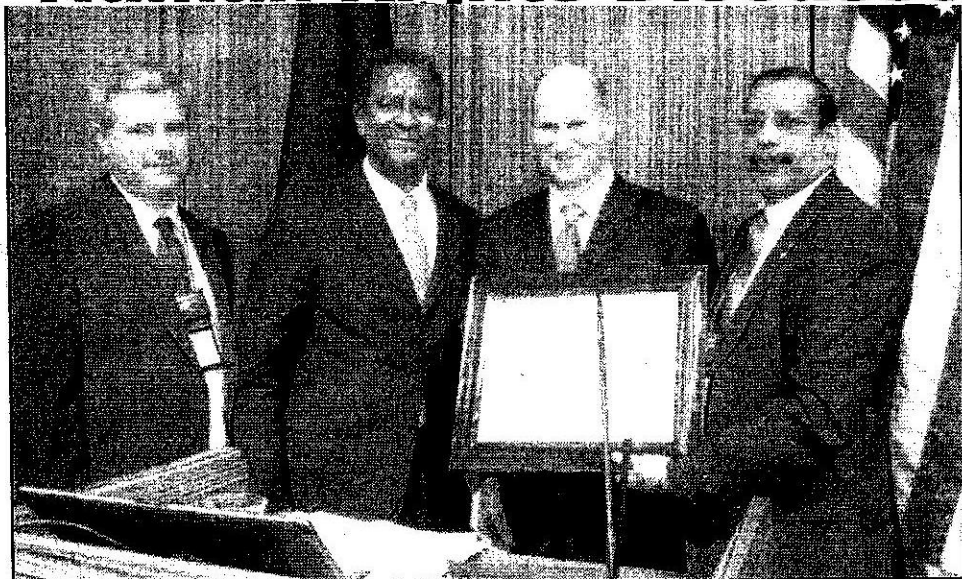


Human Rights Discussed at Housing Conference

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Among those at the conference, left to right, are John Herrion, director of disability rights, New York state Division of Human Rights; Commissioner Galen Kirkland, New York state Division of Human Rights; Charles Hammerman, president of Disability Opportunity Fund; and Edward Watkins, deputy commissioner for federal affairs, New York state Division of Human Rights.

The New York state Division of Human Rights recently held a three-day fair housing conference for people with disabilities at the Bronx Zoo.

It offered housing providers, disability advocacy groups and government agencies an opportunity to learn more about housing rights, obligations and design issues.

In federal fiscal year 2009, the state Division on Human Rights received 782 housing complaints. Of those, 41 percent alleged that disability was the basis for discrimination. Similarly, a record 10,222 fair housing discrimination complaints were filed with the Department

of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) during the same period. Discrimination based on disability was the basis of 43 percent of those complaints.

“Our Human Rights law has always been at the forefront of change to protect the rights of persons with disabilities and this conference is a testament to our commitment to ensure that they are afforded their rights under the law,” said Galen Kirkland, commissioner of the state division of Human Rights. “The Department of Housing and Urban Development is an unwavering partner and supporter of the division’s mission, and we thank them for

their collaboration in this endeavor.”

Topics of focus at the conference included new construction and compliance with federal, state and local law; housing rights of people with disabilities under the state Human Rights Law and the Fed-

eral Fair Housing Acts; handling requests for reasonable accommodations; Fair Housing Act design and construction violations and solutions; design concepts in residential developments; and investigating housing discrimination cases.