NAACP Legal Defense Fund Statement on Charges Filed Against NYPD Officer Responsible for Killing Deborah Danner

Today, New York Police Department (NYPD) Sgt. Hugh Barry was arrested and charged with murder, manslaughter, and criminally negligent homicide for fatally shooting Deborah Danner, a 66-year-old woman who suffered from mental illness, in October 2016. Sherrilyn Ifill, President and Director-Counsel at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF), issued the following statement:

“We welcome the grand jury’s conclusion that the evidence overwhelmingly supports charging Sgt. Barry with murder in the shooting death of Deborah Danner. Although we are gratified by the indictment, we know that this is only the first step in a process, and we will closely monitor the prosecution of this case. We hope that this announcement will be followed by substantive action, both in a court of law and internally by the NYPD, as opposed to the all-too-similar 1984 killing of Eleanor Bumpurs, for which no individual was ever held responsible. Ensuring that justice is served requires more than a conviction though. It requires system-wide changes to avoid future tragedies.”

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation’s first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.