

Koch names human rights commissioners

By REGINALD PATRICK
ADVANCE CITY HALL BUREAU

Mayor Edward I. Koch yesterday unveiled the final phase of his "revitalization" of the city Human Rights Commission with the naming of 13 new commissioners to serve with the agency.

Among the 13 new members named at a ceremony in City Hall was Monsignor John Servodidio of St. Joseph's R.C. Church, Rosebank, a longtime community activist with an impressive list of awards and honors earned for working with individuals and groups.

"This a real honor for me and it reinforces the type of work I've been doing since 1954 — since I've been on Staten Island," Monsignor Servodidio said. "And I think it recognizes the significance of this type of work. Back in the early days when you were out there fighting for people's rights you didn't have the welcome ears in different agencies that you have today. Something like this shows how much our whole society has changed."

Borough President Ralph J. Lamberti who dropped by at the end of the ceremony to offer his congratulations, recalled that Monsignor Servodidio began his career in the borough as Lam-

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berti's parish priest at Our Lady of Mount Carmel/St. Benedicta R.C. Church, West Brighton.

"He was Father John then," Lamberti recalled. "He's a monsignor now, but he's always been a man interested in and willing to talk about people's rights. He's not only preached it as priest, he's lived it as a man. His appointment to the commission at this time is very appropriate. He'll be a valuable member."

In the aftermath of the racial violence in Howard Beach and Jamaica over a year ago, the Koch administration has undertaken a comprehensive program to broaden the commission's mission to include education and intergroup outreach.



Monsignor John Servodidio of St. Joseph's R.C. Church, is greeted by Borough President Ralph J. Lamberti, right, and his sisters Louise Smith, left, and Loretta Servodidio.

The city has also raised the commission's budget by \$1 million to \$8.4 million. The mayor said the new commissioners will primarily do field work in their respective areas of the city "talking to people and trying to reduce racial tensions wherever they may arise."

The commissioners were screened for their non-salaried seats on the commission by the Mayor's Advisory Council on Community Relations, chaired by Bishop Joseph Sullivan.

"I'm thrilled at the new commissioners' willingness to serve,"

said Commission Chairman Dr. John Brandon. "I know their efforts will enrich the lives of all New Yorkers."

The Koch administration plans to submit legislation to the City Council next month to expand membership on the commission from 15 to 21 members "to provide for the diversity of the city's population," Koch said.

"I believe the new members we've got now provide a pretty good idea of the diversity of New York," Koch said. "Every borough of our city is represented. The new commission includes a rabbi,

a Catholic priest, and minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. There are also two lawyers, a college professor, a businessman and a doctor."

Koch also announced the appointment of Lionel Hampton, who has served on the commission since 1982, as an honorary commissioner.

"Lionel Hampton has devoted his spirit and energy to improving intergroup relations in the city," Koch said. "Monsignor Servodidio holds several degrees, among them a

master's in social work from Fordham University and a master's in criminal justice from C.W. Post in Long Island. He is the executive director of the Beacon of Hope House for the mentally disabled, a member of the board of directors of St. Vincent's Medical Center and a counselor for several programs dealing with delinquents and drug addicts. He has worked for the National Urban League and the New York City Youth Board, and has served as county, district and regional chaplain for the American Legion.

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