

Meet the Mayors

We go into more detail on some mayors, like DeBlasio, because of their long tenures or influence on today. There are mayors in between the ones listed here.

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[Eric Adams](#)

Mayor Eric Adams has served the people of New York City as an NYPD officer, State Senator, Brooklyn Borough President, and now as the 110th Mayor of the City of New York. He gave voice to a diverse coalition of working families in all five boroughs and is leading the fight to bring back New York City’s economy, reduce inequality, improve public safety, and build a stronger, healthier city that delivers for all New Yorkers.

Like so many New Yorkers, Mayor Eric Adams grew up with adversity—and overcame it.

As one of six children, born in Brownsville and raised in South Jamaica by a single mom who cleaned houses, Eric and his family did not always know if they would come home to an eviction notice on the front door or food on the table. And when he was beaten by police in the basement of a precinct house at 15, Eric faced a life-changing act of injustice.

But instead of giving into anger, Eric turned his pain into purpose and decided to change the police department from within. He joined the NYPD and became one of its most outspoken officers, calling out racism and bias in the department and pushing for major reforms.

As a founder of 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement Who Care, Eric would often police the streets in a bulletproof vest one day during the high-crime 1980's and 1990's and protest bad behavior by cops the next, marching side-by-side with his fellow civil rights advocates. He rose to the rank of captain, helping to build the first computerized system for tracking crime in the city, which led to historic gains in public safety.

Eric's efforts to change policing began his lifelong work to improve and protect New York. From the NYPD, he moved on to the State Senate, where he represented sections of central and Brownstone Brooklyn. In Albany, Eric built winning coalitions to advance New York City's values and goals, helping to push through measures to protect tenants and workers, combat gun violence, end the NYPD's abuses of stop and frisk, and advance human rights — including marriage equality. He also became the first person of color to chair the Senate's Homeland Security Committee.

Eric was then elected Brooklyn Borough President in 2013 by putting together a diverse coalition of Brooklynites to become the borough's first Black leader. As the representative of one of the nation's largest counties, Eric fought tirelessly to grow the

local economy, invest in schools, reduce inequality, improve public safety, and advocate for smart policies and better government that delivers for all New Yorkers.

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck the city, Eric moved a mattress into his office and worked around the clock to deliver donated meals and PPE to essential workers and vulnerable New Yorkers, demanding government produce more equitable relief.

In addition to continuing to fight for struggling New Yorkers and a better quality of life for all, Eric became a national leader on public health policy after learning he had developed Type 2 diabetes. Following his diagnosis, Eric completely changed his diet and his body, reversing the disease and launching a personal mission to educate New Yorkers about preventative care and wellness. His work has already led to successful proactive public health efforts across the city and increased education in schools and with high-risk populations in lower-income areas, partnering with civic organizations and health experts.

Eric is a lifelong New Yorker. He received his master's degree in public administration from Marist College, and is a graduate of New York City Technical College and the John Jay College of Criminal Justice. He is also a proud product of New York City public schools, including Bayside High School in Queens. Today he lives in Bedford-Stuyvesant, where he has resided for over 20 years. Eric is the proud father of Jordan, an aspiring filmmaker and graduate of American University.

Bill de Blasio

Bill de Blasio, original name Warren Wilhelm, Jr., (born May 8, 1961, New York, New York, U.S.), American Democratic politician who was mayor of New York City

(2014–21). He also served as Hillary Clinton’s campaign manager for her successful senatorial run in 2000 and as a New York City councillor (2002–09).

Early life

At age five he moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, with his mother, Maria, a public relations manager, and his father, Warren, a veteran of World War II who had served in the Pacific theatre and lost a leg in a grenade attack. His father, after struggling with alcoholism, later committed suicide. De Blasio graduated from New York University in 1984 and obtained a master’s degree in international and public affairs at Columbia University in 1987. (Though called Bill from an early age, he changed his name in 1983 to Warren de Blasio-Wilhelm—his mother’s family name was de Blasio—and then adopted Bill de Blasio as his legal name in 2002.)

Political career: campaign manager and councillor

De Blasio proved himself to be politically savvy early in life: as a student activist in high school and college, he advocated for student rights and protested issues as diverse as library hours and nuclear proliferation. After graduate school de Blasio served as a social relief volunteer in Nicaragua—a country then torn by a civil war between the Marxist government of the Sandinistas and counterrevolutionary forces—and returned to the United States a committed socialist. Though adopting more-centrist views with time, de Blasio continued to defend left-leaning policies.

He entered municipal politics in 1989 as a junior staffer in the mayoral campaign of David Dinkins and later became an assistant for community affairs in the Dinkins administration. In 1997 de Blasio was appointed as a regional director in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, working under Andrew Cuomo. De Blasio left that position two years later after being hired to lead Hillary Clinton’s first bid

for the U.S. Senate. As campaign manager, de Blasio encouraged teamwork and open deliberation, to the point of being criticized by some as indecisive.

After serving on a New York City school board, de Blasio was elected in 2001 (taking office in 2002) to represent the 39th district of Brooklyn in City Hall. After three terms as a city councillor, de Blasio successfully ran in 2009 for the citywide position of public advocate.

Mayor of New York City

In January 2013 de Blasio announced outside his Brooklyn home his intention to run for mayor of New York City. Underestimated during much of the Democratic Party primary, de Blasio secured the nomination with more than 40 percent of the vote, 14 points ahead of second-place finisher William Thompson, the former city comptroller. De Blasio was again underestimated by his opponents in the mayoral race, but his campaign gained traction as he came to be seen as the embodiment of change in a city led for more than 12 years by independent Michael Bloomberg.

Support for de Blasio transcended class and racial divides. Under Bloomberg's mayorship, New York City had become safer, more prosperous, and arguably more pleasant (notably through bold urban development projects) but also infamously unaffordable for all but the wealthiest New Yorkers. De Blasio placed economic inequality at the centre of his campaign, adopting the theme of New York as a tale of two cities where a few do incredibly well while the many struggle to pay for life's necessities. More concretely, de Blasio promised to raise taxes on New Yorkers earning more than \$500,000 a year and to use the resulting monies to improve education in the city, notably by providing universal prekindergarten. De Blasio also vowed to promote affordable housing and to better protect renters against abusive landlords.

Another key element of de Blasio's campaign was his commitment to reform the so-called stop-and-frisk program of the New York City Police Department (NYPD) authorizing police officers to stop, question, and search individuals suspected of criminal activity without the need of probable cause. Seen by some as an effective crime-reduction tool, the NYPD stop-and-frisk practice was decried by many, including de Blasio, for unfairly targeting African Americans and people of Hispanic descent.

Republican Party mayoral candidate Joe Lhota and other critics warned that de Blasio's policies would lead wealthy taxpayers to leave the city (negatively affecting tax revenues) and jeopardize the drastic reduction in violent crime achieved in the city by the previous two administrations, but in November 2013 de Blasio won the mayoral race in a landslide, receiving almost three-quarters of the vote. He was the first Democrat to win the New York mayoral election in more than two decades. At his inauguration in 2014, de Blasio was sworn in by former U.S. president Bill Clinton.

As mayor, de Blasio undertook a number of progressive initiatives, including his campaign pledge of universal prekindergarten. The program, which made "pre-K" available to every four-year-old in the city, was widely seen as a success. He also oversaw a continued decline in the police's use of stop-and-frisk. Despite critics' prediction of an upswing in crime, the city's crime rate fell. In addition, de Blasio focused on income inequality. However, his efforts to impose a "millionaire's tax" on wealthy New York City residents met resistance from state legislators, who were responsible for approving tax changes. In 2017 de Blasio was easily reelected mayor.

In May 2019 de Blasio announced that he was running for president the following year, joining a crowded field that included 22 other Democrats. However, he was unable to garner much support, and he dropped out of the race in September.

Michael Bloomberg

The mayoralty of Michael Bloomberg began on January 1, 2002, when Michael Bloomberg was inaugurated as the 108th mayor of New York City, and ended on December 31, 2013.

Bloomberg was known as a political pragmatist and for a managerial style that reflected his experience in the private sector. Bloomberg chose to apply a statistical approach to city management, appointing city commissioners based on their expertise and granting them wide autonomy in their decision-making. Breaking with 190 years of tradition, Bloomberg implemented a "bullpen" open plan office, reminiscent of a Wall Street trading floor, in which dozens of aides and managerial staff are seated together in a large chamber. The design was intended to promote accountability and accessibility. At the end of Bloomberg's three terms, The New York Times said, "New York is once again a thriving, appealing city where [...] the crime rate is down, the transportation system is more efficient, the environment is cleaner."

Elections and re-elections

2001 election

In 2001, the incumbent mayor of New York City, Rudy Giuliani, was ineligible for re-election, as the city limited the mayoralty to two consecutive terms. Several well-known New York City politicians aspired to succeed him. Bloomberg, a lifelong member of the Democratic Party, decided to run for mayor as a member of the Republican Party ticket.

Voting in the primary began on the morning of September 11, 2001. The primary was postponed later that day because of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center. In the rescheduled primary, Bloomberg defeated Herman Badillo, a former Congressman, to become the Republican nominee. Meanwhile, the Democratic primary did not

produce a first-round winner. After a runoff, the Democratic nomination went to New York City Public Advocate Mark Green.

In the general election, Bloomberg received Giuliani's endorsement. He also had a huge spending advantage. Although New York City's public campaign finance law restricts the size of contributions which a candidate can accept, Bloomberg chose not to use public campaign funds and instead self-financed his campaign. He spent \$73 million of his own money on his campaign, outspending Green five to one. One of the major themes of his campaign was that, with the city's economy suffering from the effects of the World Trade Center attacks, it needed a mayor with business experience.

In addition to serving as the Republican nominee, Bloomberg had the ballot line of the Independence Party. Under New York's fusion rules, a candidate can run on more than one party's line and combine all the votes received on all lines. Green, the Democrat, also had the ballot line of the Working Families Party. Bloomberg also created an independent line called Students First whose votes were combined with those on the Independence line. Overall, he won 50 percent to 48 percent.

Bloomberg's election marked the first time in New York City history that two different Republicans had been elected mayor consecutively. New York City has not been won by a Republican in a presidential election since Calvin Coolidge won in 1924.

Bloomberg is considered a social liberal: He is pro-choice, favors legalizing same-sex marriage, and is an advocate for stricter gun control laws.

In 2002, Bloomberg delivered bids from New York City to host both the Democratic and Republican nominating conventions for the 2004 presidential campaign. The city won the bid to host the Republican National Convention in 2004. The convention drew thousands of protesters, many of them local residents angry over the Iraq War and

other issues. The New York Police Department arrested approximately 1,800 protesters, but most of the cases were later dismissed.

2009 election (third)

On October 2, 2008, Bloomberg announced that he would seek to extend the city's term limits law and run for a third mayoral term in 2009, arguing that a leader of his field was needed during the Wall Street financial crisis. "Handling this financial crisis while strengthening essential services ... is a challenge I want to take on," Bloomberg said at a news conference. "So should the City Council vote to amend term limits, I plan to ask New Yorkers to look at my record of independent leadership and then decide if I have earned another term." Bloomberg promised Ronald Lauder, who wrote New York City's term limits in 1993 and spent over 4 million dollars of his own money to enable the maximum years a mayor could serve to eight years, a seat on an influential board; he agreed to stay out of future legality issues and sided with Bloomberg in running for a third term. NYPIRG filed a complaint with the City Conflict of Interest Board. On October 23, 2008, the City Council voted 29–22 in favor of extending the term limit to three consecutive four-year terms, thus allowing Bloomberg to run for office again. After two days of public hearings, Bloomberg signed the bill into law on November 3.

Bloomberg's bid for a third term generated some controversy. Civil libertarians such as former New York Civil Liberties Union Director Norman Siegel and New York Civil Rights Coalition Executive Director Michael Meyers joined with local politicians such as New York State Senator Eric Adams to protest the term limits extension.

Bloomberg's opponent was Democratic and Working Families Party nominee Bill Thompson, who had been New York City Comptroller for the past eight years and before that, President of the New York City Board of Education. Bloomberg defeated Thompson by a vote of 50.6 percent to 46.0 percent.

After the release of Independence Party campaign filings in January 2010, it was reported that Bloomberg had made two \$600,000 contributions from his personal account to the Independence Party on October 30 and November 2, 2009. The Independence Party then paid \$750,000 of that money to Republican Party political operative John Haggerty Jr.

This prompted an investigation beginning in February 2010 by the office of New York County District Attorney Cyrus Vance, Jr. into possible improprieties. The Independence Party later questioned how Haggerty spent the money, which was to go to poll-watchers. Former New York State Senator Martin Connor contended that because the Bloomberg donations were made to an Independence Party housekeeping account rather than to an account meant for current campaigns, this was a violation of campaign finance laws. Haggerty also spent money from a separate \$200,000 donation from Bloomberg on office space. In 2011, Haggerty was convicted of stealing campaign funds from Bloomberg; he admitted his guilt and was sentenced to one and a third to four years in prison

Public opinion

Throughout 2006 and 2007, Bloomberg had approval ratings consistently above 70%, according to the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute. Differences between Republican, Democratic and independent voters were small. "An effective, straightforward guy who calls it as it is – that's Mayor Bloomberg's most attractive quality, New Yorkers think. And they like his businessman approach to the job," said Quinnipiac polling director Maurice Carroll.

Bloomberg had a 49% approval rating in August 2010 compared to 56% in April. It also stated in August that 47% of Democratic voters expressed approval compared to 55%

of Republican voters. Lee Miringoff, director of Marist College's Institute for Public Opinion, remarked that governing during a world economic recession coupled with Bloomberg's stance in support of the Islamic complex near Ground Zero (Bloomberg defended the owner's right to build when few other did) had dampened Bloomberg's polling numbers.

In November 2010, a Public Policy Polling survey of registered voters found that 19% expressed a favorable opinion of Bloomberg, while a 38% plurality expressed a negative view.

Five months before the end of Bloomberg's tenure, a New York Times survey placed his approval rating at 49%, against 40% who disapproved. In a January 2014 Quinnipiac poll, 64 percent of voters called Bloomberg's 12 years as mayor "mainly a success."

Issues

Environment

Bloomberg was one of the most active big city mayors on the issue of the environment. On April 22, 2007, he announced PLANYC: an aggressive program to vastly improve New York City's environmental sustainability by 2030. On May 23, 2007, Bloomberg announced that by 2012, all the city's medallion taxis will be hybrid cars. PLANYC aims to improve the city's sustainability through a multi-pronged approach that includes, among other things, the adoption of traffic congestion pricing based upon a system currently used in London and Singapore. Bloomberg contended this measure would reduce pollution and traffic congestion while raising revenue for the city. He also pledged to plant one million trees in New York City, in an effort to clean the air and boost property values.

Bloomberg's DEP Commissioner Christopher O. Ward was able to implement the Long Island Sound Nitrogen Reduction Program, federal approval of the Filtration Avoidance Agreement for the Protection and Water Quality of the Upstate Reservoir System, and the funding and completion of the Manhattan segment of the third water tunnel.

In 2012, Travel + Leisure rated New York City the "Dirtiest American City," for having the most unremoved, publicly visible litter. Air quality in the city, however, was the cleanest it had been in 50 years under Bloomberg.

In dealing with global warming and New York's role in it, Bloomberg enacted a plan called PlaNYC: A Greener, Greater New York to fight global warming, protect the environment and prepare New York for the projected 1 million more people expected to be living in the city by the year 2030. Bloomberg has been involved in motivating other cities to make changes, delivering the keynote address at the C40 Large Cities Climate Summit and stating, "[W]e now know beyond a doubt that global warming is a reality. And the question we must all answer is, what are we going to do about it?" Bloomberg also talked about how he would go about fighting climate change by reducing carbon dioxide emissions, using cleaner and more efficient fuels, and encouraging public transportation. His ideas have occasionally been rejected, such as the New York State Assembly's rejection of his idea for applying congestion pricing below 60th Street in Manhattan.

On February 14, 2013, Bloomberg called for a ban on Styrofoam food packaging. He asked to begin recycling more plastics and food waste.

On February 21, 2013, Bloomberg spoke with oil tycoon T. Boone Pickens in support of a new eco-friendly food truck. A press conference took place in front of city hall where the company, Neapolitan Express, explained how their mobile pizzeria emits 75% less

greenhouse gases than trucks running on gas or diesel. The company was expected to launch early 2013.

Crime

During Bloomberg's tenure, the reduction of crime that began during Mayor Rudy Giuliani's tenure continued. Bloomberg's approach to the issue was more low-key than that of Giuliani, who was often criticized by advocates for the homeless and civil rights groups. However, there exists some criticism that the reduced-crime statistics are frequently falsified or doctored to exaggerate the reduction. According to Salon.com, "[w]hile Bloomberg has kept aspects of the Giuliani management style in place, he has seriously dialed back the shouty rhetoric."

Raymond Kelly, Bloomberg's police commissioner from 2002, in his financial disclosures, "reported six shared plane flights to Florida in 2008 and five more in 2009, provided by Mayor ... Bloomberg at an undetermined cost."

Bloomberg came under fire for supporting the NYPD's stop and frisk program, which has been criticized for unfairly targeting African Americans and Latinos. In response to allegations that the program unfairly targets African-American and Hispanic-American individuals, then-Mayor Michael Bloomberg has stated that it is because African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans are more likely to be violent criminals and victims of violent crime. In a June 2013 interview with WOR Radio, Bloomberg explained

One newspaper and one news service, they just keep saying 'oh it's a disproportionate percentage of a particular ethnic group.' That may be, but it's not a disproportionate percentage of those who witnesses and victims describe as committing the [crime]. In that case, incidentally, I think we disproportionately stop whites too much and minorities too little.

In February 2020, an audio recording surfaced of Michael Bloomberg defending the program at a February 2015 Aspen Institute event. In the speech, Bloomberg said:

Ninety-five percent of murders—murderers and murder victims fit one M.O. You can just take the description, Xerox it, and pass it out to all the cops. They are male, minorities, 16 to 25. That's true in New York, that's true in virtually every city (inaudible). And that's where the real crime is. You've got to get the guns out of the hands of people that are getting killed. So you want to spend the money on a lot of cops in the streets. Put those cops where the crime is, which means in minority neighborhoods. So one of the unintended consequences is people say, 'Oh my God, you are arresting kids for marijuana that are all minorities.' Yes, that's true. Why? Because we put all the cops in minority neighborhoods. Yes, that's true. Why do we do it? Because that's where all the crime is. And the way you get the guns out of the kids' hands is to throw them up against the wall and frisk them... And then they start... 'Oh I don't want to get caught.' So they don't bring the gun. They still have a gun, but they leave it at home.

Education

After winning election, Bloomberg convinced the state legislature to grant him authority over the city's public school system. From 1968 until 2002, New York City's schools were managed by the Board of Education, which had seven members. Only two of the seven were appointed by the mayor, which meant the city had a minority of representatives on the board and the mayor's ability to shape education policy was greatly diminished. In addition to the Board, 25 local school boards also played a part in running the system. In 2002, at Bloomberg's urging, the local boards and Board of

Education were abolished and replaced with a new mayoral agency, the Department of Education.

Bloomberg appointed Joel Klein as Schools Chancellor to run the new department, which was based at the renovated Tweed Courthouse near City Hall. Under Bloomberg and Chancellor Klein, test scores rose, and the City obtained a higher percentage of funding from the state budget. Graduation rates also increased. Bloomberg opposed social promotion, and favored after-school and summer-school programs to help schoolchildren catch up, rather than allowing them to advance to the next grade level where they may be unprepared. Despite often tense relations with teachers' unions, he avoided a teacher strike by concluding a contract negotiation in which teachers received an average raise of 15% in exchange for givebacks and productivity increases. Teachers overall got a 43 percent salary increase

Bloomberg enforced a strengthened cell-phone ban in city schools that had its roots dating to a 1988 school system ban on pagers. The ban is controversial among some parents, who are concerned with their ability to contact their children. Administration representatives noted that students are distracted in class by cell phones and often use them inappropriately, in some instances sending and receiving text messages, taking photographs, surfing the Internet, and playing video games, and that cell-phone bans exist in other cities including Detroit and Philadelphia.[citation needed]

On May 27, 2007, Bloomberg announced that the four-year high school graduation rate in New York City had reached 60%, the highest level since the city began calculating the rate in 1986 and an 18% increase since the Mayor assumed control of the public schools in 2002.

On June 30, 2009, mayoral control lapsed as the New York State Senate declined to renew it. However, mayoral control was restored less than two months later, with a few amendments. Mayoral control allows New York's mayor to have, in practice, complete control of the school system.

Rudy Giuliani

Early in his political career, Giuliani became affiliated with the Republican Party. After being narrowly defeated in 1989, he won election as mayor in 1993, the first Republican to hold the position in two decades. He promised to reform the city's finances and to crack down on crime, and he was credited with success in both areas. He cut expenditures by, among other things, trimming the city's workforce and winning concessions from unions. The mayor encouraged the police to take an aggressive stance against even minor infractions of the law—even litterers, jaywalkers, and reckless cabdrivers were ticketed as lawbreakers. This campaign earned him the sobriquet "the Nanny of New York." However, the crime rate fell, and the mayor claimed that New York had become a more civilized place.

Giuliani had his detractors, however. Critics pointed out that he was taking credit for a crime decrease that was part of a nationwide trend. Further, in several incidents involving charges of police brutality, the mayor seemed to be defending officers' misconduct. To some critics the mayor's actions could be petty, as when he refused to meet visiting dignitaries if he disagreed with their policies. In a highly publicized incident in 1999, the mayor denounced a controversial exhibit at the Brooklyn Museum of Art that included works that many observers found offensive or sacrilegious. He attempted to withdraw funding for the museum but was overruled in court. Nonetheless, the mayor generally maintained high approval ratings, and there was speculation that he would run for the U.S. Senate in 2000. However, following the

disclosures that he had prostate cancer and that he was separating from his wife, Donna Hanover, Giuliani announced in May 2000 that he would not run.

On September 11, 2001, New York City became the scene of the deadliest terrorist attack in the United States after hijackers flew commercial airplanes into the twin towers of the World Trade Center, killing some 2,800 people. Giuliani drew high praise for his handling of the situation, and there were calls that he run for a third term, even though New York City law barred a mayor from serving more than two consecutive terms. Giuliani, however, decided not to seek reelection. He received an honorary knighthood from Queen Elizabeth II for his efforts in the wake of the attacks.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/24/nyregion/david-dinkins-dead.html>

David N. Dinkins (obituary)

Mr. Dinkins, who served in the early 1990s, was seen as a compromise selection for voters weary of racial unrest, crime and fiscal turmoil. The racial harmony he sought remained elusive during his years in office.

By Robert D. McFadden

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David N. Dinkins, a barber's son who became New York City's first Black mayor on the wings of racial harmony but who was turned out by voters after one term over his handling of racial violence in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, died on Monday night at his home on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. He was 93.

His death was confirmed by Mayor Bill de Blasio. It came less than two months after Mr. Dinkins's wife, Joyce Dinkins, died at 89.

Cautious, deliberate, a Harlem Democrat who climbed to City Hall through relatively minor elective and appointive offices, Mr. Dinkins had none of the flamboyance of Edward I. Koch, who preceded him, or Rudolph W. Giuliani, who succeeded him — and who, along with Fiorello H. La Guardia in the 1930s and '40s, were arguably the city's most dominant mayors of the 20th century. Indeed, many historians and political experts say that as the 106th mayor of New York, from 1990 through 1993, Mr. Dinkins suffered by comparison with the Gullivers bestriding him.

Mr. Dinkins was a compromise selection for voters exhausted by racial strife, corruption, crime and fiscal turmoil, and he proved to be an able caretaker, historians say, rather than an innovator

of grand achievements.

He inherited huge budget deficits that grew larger. He faced some of the worst crime problems in the city's history and dealt with them by expanding the police to record levels. He kept city libraries open, revitalized Times Square and rehabilitated housing in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Harlem. But the racial amity that was his fondest hope remained a distant dream, and his lapses in responding to the Crown Heights crisis became an insurmountable legacy.

Secure in history as the city's first (and so far only) Black mayor, Mr. Dinkins became a quiet elder statesman in later years, teaching at Columbia University, hosting a radio talk show on WLIB, attending receptions, dinners and ceremonies, and occasionally being consulted by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and others occupying or seeking office.

In a 2013 memoir, Mr. Dinkins acknowledged missteps during his term, including a failure to contain the race riots in Crown Heights in 1991, for which he largely blamed his police commissioner, and his refusal to break a prolonged Black boycott of a Korean-owned grocery store in Brooklyn in 1990. But he ascribed the narrowness of his victory in the 1989 mayoral election, and his defeat four years later, not to missteps but to the fact that he was Black.

"I think it was just racism, pure and simple," he said in "A Mayor's Life: Governing

New York's Gorgeous Mosaic," written with Peter Knobler.



David N. Dinkins campaigning for mayor in Lower Manhattan in 1989. Neal Boenzi/The New York Times

Mr. Dinkins liked to call New York's diverse population a "gorgeous mosaic," and in a city where the ideals of the melting pot had often been at odds with the realities of racial, ethnic and religious conflicts, he saw himself as a conciliator who, with patience and dignity, might subdue the passions of multicultural neighborhoods.

It sounded plausible in the violent election year of 1989. A white woman jogging in Central Park had been raped and savagely beaten and a group of Black and Hispanic youths arrested. (They were

exonerated 13 years later after a former convict confessed to the crime.) A Black teenager had been accosted by whites and shot dead in Brooklyn. The city, plagued by drugs and homelessness, lurched from crisis to crisis. The mayoral campaign itself seemed on the brink of racial schism.

Mr. Koch, the incumbent Democrat regarded by many Black residents as insensitive to their interests, was seeking an unprecedented fourth term after years of divisive politics and corruption scandals that had ballooned around him. Mr. Giuliani, a former United States attorney in Manhattan and the fusion Republican-Liberal candidate, conveyed the pugnaciousness of a law-and-order prosecutor.

Mr. Dinkins was viewed as an uninspiring alternative. His style was ponderous and scripted; even supporters called him wooden. He was 62 and the Manhattan borough president, a post won on his third try. For 10 years he had been the city clerk, a patronage appointee who kept marriage licenses and municipal records. Long ago he had been a one-term state assemblyman.

There were questions about his personal finances. He had failed to file tax returns for four years. His political base did not reach far beyond Harlem, where he had been a clubhouse fixture for 25 years. And he had close ties to the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who had rankled Jews by calling New York "Hymietown."

But to a city fed up with racial strife and chronic crime, Mr. Dinkins offered himself as a peacemaker, and one who would aid the poor and balance budgets by spreading the pain. He delivered his message in a gentleman's voice laced with quaint phrases like "bless your heart," "pray tell" and "one ought to think so."

He looked cool, even in the yellow heat of August. He was tall, slender and impeccably neat, with short gray hair and a trim mustache. He played tennis and habitually showered and changed clothes two or three times a day. He sometimes wore windbreakers, but usually turned out in elegant double-breasted suits made to order in Chinatown. He had four tuxedos, and used them often.

Historic Election



Mr. Dinkins was sworn in on New Year's Day in 1990 beside his wife, Joyce Dinkins. His predecessor, Edward I. Koch, looked on. Chester Higgins Jr./The New York Times

Cobbling together a fragile coalition of labor unions, liberals and minorities, Mr. Dinkins soundly beat Mayor Koch in the primary and, in a city dominated by Democrats, defeated Mr. Giuliani in November by one of the narrowest mayoral margins of the century.

The election signified a historic change in a city where non-Hispanic whites, though still dominant economically, were no longer a majority. And New York became the last of the nation's 10 largest cities to elect a Black mayor.

On Jan. 1, 1990, Mr. Dinkins was sworn in before a jubilant crowd of 12,000 in City Hall Park. "I stand before you today as the elected leader of the greatest city of a great nation, to which my ancestors were brought, chained and whipped in the hold of a slave ship," he said. "We have not finished the journey toward liberty and justice, but surely we have come a long way."

Mr. Dinkins — who wanted to build housing, improve health care and respond to the concerns of women, people with disabilities, gay men and lesbians, the aged and minorities — was the city's most liberal mayor since John V. Lindsay in the 1960s and early '70s.

But the city was in trouble. Real estate and financial booms that had fueled its growth in the 1980s were over. The deepest local recession since the Great Depression had cut jobs and tax revenues and left a municipal budget hole of \$1.8 billion. Homeless people occupied the streets. AIDS, heroin and crack cocaine were epidemic. Murders surpassed 1,900 a year. To the rest of the nation, the city of skyscrapers and soaring hopes seemed a cesspool of urban decay.

With federal aid to cities off significantly, Mr. Dinkins first wavered over a \$28 billion budget, then cut spending for health, education, housing, social services and programs for children and older and poor people. He also raised taxes by \$800 million, the largest increase in city history. (He helped bring the 1992 Democratic National Convention to New York, trying to replenish city coffers, but it was no panacea.)

Mr. Dinkins picked the most diverse range of agency leaders in history. Two women became deputy mayors, and others were named commissioners of investigations, finance, parks, human resources and housing. He appointed the city's first Puerto Rican fire commissioner and a Black, openly gay psychiatrist as mental health commissioner. As police commissioner he chose Lee P. Brown, a Black veteran of the Atlanta and Houston forces.

It was a strong-willed cabinet of goads, gadflies and bureaucrats, and there were interagency squabbles and rivalries that the mayor seemed unable to control. Deputy mayors feuded openly, and Mr. Dinkins allowed it. Norman Steisel, the first deputy mayor, was nominally in charge, but major decisions had to be cleared by Deputy Mayor Bill Lynch Jr., the top political adviser. Intrigue and gridlock resulted.

The mayor himself was paradoxical: punctilious and demanding of subordinates, yet reluctant to make decisions until he absolutely had to. He sometimes refused to tell his commissioners what he was thinking, then complained that they did not understand him or what he wanted. Meetings often ended not with actions but with a decision to keep weighing options. It was, as one commissioner put it, "complete disarray and disorganization down there."

Polished Gentility



Mr. Dinkins campaigning in Jamaica, Queens, in September 1989. To a city worn down by racial strife and chronic crime, he offered himself as a peacemaker. Michelle V. Agins/The New York Times

Mr. Dinkins was unfailingly courteous in public, exuding charm, kissing women's hands, speaking softly, smiling easily: the polished gentility of decades of civic functions. But privately he could be peevish, surly, even fiercely angry. And the measured style that had been a campaign asset had begun to look like indecision. A headline in *The Washington Post* asked, "Is Dinkins Too Nice for New York?" And *The City Sun*, a Brooklyn weekly for Black readers, upbraided the mayor, writing, "Frankly, you are beginning to look like a wimp."

By summer 1990, Mr. Dinkins was on the defensive, reacting to a series of chilling crimes, including random shootings related to gangs and drugs that took the lives of children caught in the crossfire. The mayor found himself under pressure to respond, but said he was waiting for Commissioner Brown's report on overhauling his department.

Then a young tourist from Utah was stabbed to death as he tried to protect his mother from a subway mugger. Outrage ensued. Editorials called the mayor ineffectual and suggested that the city was suffering a morale crisis.

Finally, in October, a shaken Mr. Dinkins offered a barrage of anti-crime proposals, including a record expansion of the police and a plan to return officers to neighborhood beats. "We will not wage war by degree," he said, calling for thousands of new officers to bring department strength to 42,400.

Controversy also swirled around his failure to resolve a Black boycott of a Korean grocery in Brooklyn. It began when a Haitian-American woman said a store worker had insulted and assaulted her. The owner said the woman had not paid for groceries. A Black crowd defended her, and the confrontation widened into a boycott that went on for months, with protests, rallies and threats. Diplomacy went nowhere. The contretemps finally faded and the grocery was sold. But the mayor, who had gone on television to appeal for racial tolerance, fared badly, so reluctant to offend either side that he had alienated both.

"It may well be that I waited an overly long time to take this step," Mr. Dinkins wrote in his memoir, referring to his televised appeal for tolerance, "but I had faith in the court system and in the

rationality of people to come to satisfactory conclusions among themselves. I may have been wrong on both counts.”

Racial problems surfaced again in Brooklyn in summer 1991. A dozen bias-related episodes erupted in Canarsie, a predominantly white neighborhood, including attacks on Black people and the firebombing of a white-owned real estate office. As civil liberties groups marched in protest, the mayor met with community leaders. He tried to walk a fine line, denouncing bigotry but avoiding phrases that might taint the community as racist. It sounded tepid.

Chaos in Crown Heights



Mr. Dinkins spoke with Jewish and Black residents in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, in August 1991, as unrest roiled the neighborhood. John Sotomayor/The New York Times

The events that came to symbolize the failures and ultimate downfall of the Dinkins administration unfolded in August 1991 in Crown Heights, a neighborhood of Black Caribbean-Americans and Hasidic Jews who had long been at loggerheads.

The trouble began when a car driven by a Hasidic Jew, part of the entourage of the Lubavitcher grand rebbe, Menachem M. Schneerson, struck and killed Gavin Cato, a Black 7-year-old. Hours later, in apparent retaliation, a mob of Black teenagers surrounded Yankel Rosenbaum, a 29-year-old Hasidic scholar from Australia, who was fatally stabbed. Rioting and fights flared over four days. Stores were looted and dozens of residents and police officers were injured. The outbreak ended only after Mr. Dinkins acknowledged police failures and ordered more effective tactics to quell the violence.

There was no evidence that Mr. Dinkins had restrained the police from protecting Hasidic Jews from marauding Black residents, as some Jews charged. Indeed, he had visited Mr. Rosenbaum on his deathbed and confronted angry members of a Black crowd who had hurled bottles at him. But he was widely criticized for not moving quickly enough. Even Mr. Dinkins conceded that the police had failed to suppress the violence for three days. Jews denounced the mayor for months, and that was hardly the end of the matter.

In 1992, a Black teenager charged with killing Mr. Rosenbaum was acquitted in a jury trial, touching

off more protests. Mr. Dinkins was vilified for not repudiating the verdict. Meanwhile, Black residents of Crown Heights accused the mayor of pandering to the Hasidim. The mayor went on television to answer his critics and defend his handling of the crisis. He also went to Crown Heights to appeal for harmony.

But as Mr. Dinkins sought re-election in 1993, a state report concluded that he had been slow to appreciate the gravity of the situation, failed to question police commanders assertively and did not act decisively until the fourth day to switch tactics and end the violence.



Mr. Dinkins with supporters in the Bronx during his unsuccessful re-election campaign in August 1993. Susan Harris for The New York Times

Mr. Giuliani, riding a groundswell of voter disaffection, narrowly defeated Mr. Dinkins in November, winning the Republican vote, white neighborhoods in Brooklyn and Queens and on Staten Island and Democrats alienated by Crown Heights and other race-related events. Some Dinkins supporters said he had always been held to a different standard because of his race. But if he believed that, he never said so publicly.

Long after his defeat, Mr. Dinkins remained haunted by Crown Heights. Hasidic leaders accused him and the city in a lawsuit of failing to protect them during the riots. It was settled by the Giuliani administration in 1998 for \$1.1 million, and Mayor Giuliani, in a clear slap at Mr. Dinkins, apologized for the city's "clearly inadequate response" to the crisis. Mr. Dinkins, who was not held personally liable for damages, called the settlement blatantly political.

But in a gesture of conciliation, he invited Mr. Giuliani to dine with him. "As much as we disagree," he said, "I extend to him my hand in brotherhood." Mr. Giuliani refused.

Mr. Dinkins, in his memoir, denounced Mr. Giuliani as "a cold, unkind person" who practiced "the politics of boundless ambition without the guidance of a set of core beliefs or the humility and restraint of experience."

He recalled that the comedian Jackie Mason, who supported Mr. Giuliani in the 1993 election, called Mr. Dinkins a "fancy schvartze," using a derogatory Yiddish term for Black people. He was "essentially calling me a nigger," Mr. Dinkins wrote. He said that Mr. Giuliani's underlying campaign message was: "The city is in terrible financial straits. Do you really want a Black man presiding over

it in this time of trouble?"

From Trenton to Harlem



Mr. Dinkins, then a candidate for the presidency of the borough of Manhattan, in Harlem in 1985. Neal Boenzi/The New York Times

David Norman Dinkins was born on July 10, 1927, in Trenton, N.J., the son of Sally and William Harvey Dinkins Jr., who had moved from Virginia the previous year. His parents separated when he was in the first grade (they later divorced), and he and his younger sister, Joyce, moved to Harlem with their mother, who worked as a dollar-a-day domestic servant.

The children soon returned to Trenton to live with their father and his new wife, Lottie Hartgell. David was a good student, particularly in Latin, at Trenton Central High School. After graduating in 1945, he served briefly in the Army, but transferred to the Marine Corps and spent most of his 13-month hitch at Camp Lejeune, in North Carolina. Discharged in August 1946, he enrolled at the historically Black Howard University in Washington on the G.I. Bill of Rights, majored in mathematics and graduated with honors in 1950.

At Howard, he met Joyce Burrows, a sociology major whom he married in 1953 after her graduation. They had two children, David Jr. and Donna Dinkins Hoggard. Mr. Dinkins is survived by his children, two grandchildren and his sister, Joyce Belton.

Mr. Dinkins and his wife settled in Harlem, where her father, Daniel L. Burrows, was a real estate and insurance broker with political connections. Mr. Burrows had served two terms in the State Assembly and was one of the first Black lawmakers to join the inner circle of Tammany Hall, the Manhattan Democratic machine. A godfather to a generation of Harlem politicians, he took Mr. Dinkins under his wing.



Mr. Dinkins and Joyce Dinkins at home on Election Day in 1989. She died in October at 89. Chester Higgins Jr./The New York Times

Mr. Dinkins attended Brooklyn Law School, working nights at his father-in-law's liquor store and graduated in 1956. He joined a firm that became Dyett, Alexander & Dinkins, establishing a modest practice in banking, probate and real estate. And he joined the Carver Democratic Club, run by J. Raymond Jones, a.k.a. the Harlem Fox, who mentored many of the district's business and political leaders.

Mr. Dinkins's political apprenticeship was a long, slow passage in obscurity. With Mr. Jones's support, he was elected to the Assembly in 1965. But his district was redrawn, and he did not seek re-election. He would not win another election for almost 20 years.

In Harlem, he was a perpetual fourth in the group called the Gang of Four, the others being — Charles B. Rangel, who would become a senior member of Congress; Percy E. Sutton, a future Manhattan borough president; and Basil A. Paterson, a state senator who would be deputy mayor under Mr. Koch and whose son, David A. Paterson, was governor of New York from March 2008 through 2010.

As president of the city's appointive Board of Elections in 1972-73, Mr. Dinkins widened voter rolls. In 1973, he was nominated by Mayor Abraham D. Beame to be the city's first Black deputy mayor, but he withdrew after admitting that he had not filed income tax returns from 1969 to 1972. He called it an oversight and paid the taxes and penalties, but it was a severe setback.

In 1975, Mayor Beame appointed Mr. Dinkins city clerk, a post he held for a decade. It was not political downtime. Almost every night, Mr. Dinkins attended dinners and made contacts. He lost races for the Manhattan borough presidency in 1977 and 1981 but finally won the post in 1985. Over the next four years, he enhanced his reputation as a friend of the poor, the homeless and people with AIDS.

As Mr. Dinkins ran for mayor in 1989, two crimes set the campaign's dominant racial themes. In April, the woman who became known as the Central Park jogger was raped, beaten and left for dead. In August, just weeks before the primary, Yusuf K. Hawkins, 16, was killed after being taunted by bat-wielding white youths in Bensonhurst, Brooklyn.

Mr. Dinkins, cool in his double-breasted suit, became the calm voice of reason in the tense city.

Ed Shanahan, Jeffery C. Mays and Todd S. Purdum contributed reporting.

Robert D. McFadden is a senior writer on the Obituaries desk and the winner of the 1996 Pulitzer Prize for spot news reporting. He joined The Times in May 1961 and is also the co-author of two books. More about Robert D. McFadden

Ed Koch

Ed Koch, in full Edward Irving Koch, (born December 12, 1924, Bronx, New York, U.S.—died February 1, 2013, New York City), American politician who served as mayor of New York City (1978–89) and was known for his tenacity and brashness.

After serving in the army during World War II, Koch graduated from New York University Law School (1948). He subsequently practiced law, becoming a founding partner of Koch, Lankenau, Schwartz & Kovner in 1963. Koch, a member of the Democratic Party, was instrumental in dismantling the influence of Tammany Hall power broker Carmine De Sapio, whom he defeated twice (1963 and 1965) as Greenwich Village district leader. Koch was a member (1966–68) of the City Council, supporting liberal causes, before his 1968 election to the U.S. House of Representatives, where he served from 1969 to 1977.

In 1977 Koch was elected to the first of three terms as mayor of New York City. When he took office the following year, the city was reeling from high crime, a devastating 1977 blackout, and a fiscal crisis. During his first term, which many considered his best, he instituted austerity measures and moderated the municipal unions, measures that helped bolster the city's finances during his second term. Koch, who was known for his trademark catchphrase "How'm I doin'?", won a third term with 78 percent of the vote, but that period was marked by corruption allegations aimed at his political associates, as well as criticisms of his handling of the AIDS crisis. However, he was credited with instituting an ambitious housing program that led to the refurbishment of

thousands of abandoned housing units. Long known for his brash outspokenness, Koch confessed that “I’m the sort of person who will never get ulcers. Why? Because I say exactly what I think. I’m the sort of person who might give other people ulcers.” Nonetheless, some of his remarks were considered racially insensitive and raised hackles among African Americans, as did his closure of a hospital that had long served the Black community. The divisive nature of his last term resulted in his losing his fourth bid for election to David Dinkins, who became New York City’s first Black mayor.

Koch, the ultimate showman and raconteur, stayed in the media spotlight as a columnist, talk-show host, and writer. He published two memoirs, *Mayor* (1984) and *Citizen Koch* (1992). The documentary film *Koch* (2013) opened in theatres the day that he died.

Robert F. Wagner, in full Robert Ferdinand Wagner, Jr., (born April 20, 1910, New York, New York, U.S.—died February 12, 1991, New York), American Democratic Party politician who served as mayor of New York City (1954–65).

Wagner was named for his father, a U.S. senator and sponsor of the Social Security Act. After an education at Yale University (A.B., 1933, LL.D., 1937), Wagner served as an intelligence officer in the Army Air Corps during World War II. He launched his political career by associating himself with the powerful Democratic machine Tammany Hall, which had controlled city and state politics in New York for 150 years. Wagner was aided by his father and quickly advanced to the position of Manhattan borough president (1949).

Abraham Beame

Abraham D. Beame, 94, the diminutive Democrat and former accountant who served as the 104th mayor of New York through the darkest days of the city's 1975 fiscal crisis, died Feb. 10 in a hospital here. He died of complications of open-heart surgery.

Mr. Beame, who served as mayor from 1974 to 1978, was the city's first Jewish mayor. He died two months after the death of his City Hall predecessor, John V. Lindsay.

Mr. Beame spent his last years defending his reputation from those who said he was a bean counter who couldn't count -- a man who, as city budget director, comptroller and finally as mayor, failed to prevent a fiscal catastrophe of historic proportions.

The crisis began when banks refused to buy city notes because the city could not provide enough information about uncollected real estate taxes. Before it was over, municipal job rolls, salaries and services were cut and a mountain of debt was made manageable by a complex partnership of union pension funds, banks and the state and federal governments.

The city was "well on the road to recovery" by the time he left office on Jan. 1, 1978, Mr. Beame insisted. "I inherited a budget gap of \$1.5 billion, and when I left we had a surplus of \$200 million," he said.

Mr. Beame was an unlikely politician. He was 5-foot-2, soft-spoken and utterly without charisma -- everything his predecessor, Lindsay, was not.

Lindsay's movie star good looks and political savvy helped quell riots in the city during the tumultuous 1960s. His charisma drew national attention and brought about interest

in first the Republican and then the Democratic Party for a possible Lindsay presidency.

Mr. Beame's parents -- who were Polish-Jewish socialist revolutionaries -- were fleeing Poland, which was then controlled by the Russian czar, when his mother gave birth in London. The family moved to New York, where Mr. Beame showed the beginning of his flair for numbers and accounting by graduating at the top of his class from the High School of Commerce and received perfect scores on the state Regents bookkeeping tests.

While growing up, he worked in the family restaurant and earned extra money by knocking on doors to wake neighbors for work. Inspired by Horatio Alger books, he worked eight hours a day at a factory while attending high school.

Despite his size, he was known for his toughness: His nickname was "Spunky."

In 1928, he graduated from the City College of New York with an accounting degree and married Mary Ingerman, who was his wife, partner, and political confidant until her death in 1995.

From 1929 to 1946, he taught high school accounting and operated his own accounting firm. He also taught at Rutgers University in the mid-1940s. In 1946, he made his first step into the political arena when he became a city assistant budget director, and then was budget director from 1952 to 1961.

In 1961, he ran for city comptroller as an anti-machine ally of Mayor Robert Wagner (D). He held that post for four years. After Wagner announced his retirement, Mr. Beame announced his candidacy for the 1965 mayoral election. As the Democratic Party

nominee, he was opposed by Lindsay, a slick and savvy silk-stocking Manhattan congressman, who was nominated by both the Republican and Liberal parties, and William F. Buckley Jr., the television personality and erudite editor of National Review magazine who was the Conservative Party nominee.

Lindsay won an election that received enormous national coverage. Lindsay made good copy as a kind of liberal Hollywood Republican who was taking on not only the entrenched Democratic machine of New York, but his own party's conservatives. Buckley, brilliant and witty, was more at home on television than either of his opponents. Mr. Beame, by contrast, had a figure made for radio -- he was short, often appeared lost, and frequently spoke in a syntax that was entirely his own. And, unfortunately for him, this became apparent in televised debates.

In 1969, Lindsay won a stormy reelection victory and Mr. Beame won back his old job as comptroller. Then, in 1973, Lindsay retired as mayor while Mr. Beame won a wide-open Democratic primary and then the general election.

New Yorkers seemed to initially welcome the distinctly unflashy and sometimes bumbling Mr. Beame as a welcome change to Lindsay, who branded New York "Fun City" while schools seemed to dissolve in anarchy, finances and unions were flying out of control, and the city seemed to fight more with police and firefighters than with increasing crime and fires.

Mr. Beame inherited a mess. His tenure will be remembered as the time the bill came due for decades of profligate government and for years of accounting gimmicks -- which Mr. Beame had warned against for years -- that disguised the true dimension of the looming financial disaster.

In attempts to right the sinking city ship, he took a series of actions that were well nigh political suicide. He cut 60,000 city jobs, then by 1975, he was raising the transit fare from 35 to 50 cents, closing firehouses and police stations, and imposing tuition on what had been a free City University. School construction was halted, hospital beds decreased, and city payrolls were paid late.

Mr. Beame seemed unable to secure financial help from federal, state or private agencies. At the same time, the young, the old and the welfare population increased as factories closed and middle class taxpayers fled to the suburbs. On top of it all, it was during these years that the serial killer known as "Son of Sam" terrorized the city and a blackout resulted in crime and 3,000 arrests.

When financial salvation arrived, it was by way of Albany, where the state put together a special package, including a new Municipal Assistance Corp., that got funds for the city. But Mr. Beame received no credit for this, and even saw his powers as mayor diminish.

He was defeated in his bid for a second term, when he finished third in the Democratic primary behind Edward I. Koch, who went on to become mayor, and Mario Cuomo.

After leaving the mayor's office, Mr. Beame worked in New York banking and traveled.

Survivors include a son, a brother, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Abraham D. Beame, a former accountant, was New York's mayor during the fiscal crisis in 1975.

John Lindsay

Last of the Liberal Republicans

Fifty years ago, John V. Lindsay was elected Mayor of New York City. He was a liberal Republican, a species not uncommon in the Northeast after the Second World War. But Lindsay was one of the last, already bucking a trend: he would not get the Republican nomination when he ran for re-election in 1969. Instead, he won on the Liberal Party line with 42% of the vote in a three-way race. By 1971, Lindsay cut his ties with the GOP and became a Democrat.

Lindsay's tenure as Mayor reads as a caricature of bad old New York City, but it all happened: a paralyzing twelve-day transportation strike that began his first day in office; a teachers' strike over decentralization that devolved into ugly instances of racism and anti-Semitism; and strikes by sanitation workers, sewer treatment workers, and even Broadway workers. And the weather didn't help: the city's uneven snow-removal after the Blizzard of 1969 enraged residents of the Outer Boroughs, something every NYC Mayor has lived in fear of since.

One of Lindsay's successes was that the city did not erupt in riots after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in April, 1968, as other major American cities did. But Lindsay's outreach to African-Americans was a major reason why white ethnic voters rejected him in the re-election campaign of 1969.

Maria C. Lizzi looks into "white backlash, racial identity, and Italian American stereotypes" in that campaign, in which both Lindsay's Republican and Democratic opponents were Italian-Americans. She writes, "if the racism of white ethnics was specifically anti-black, it also resembled the interethnic resentments and hostility 'white' ethnic groups had directed towards each other in urban America" as they

battled to “assimilate to whiteness” during the course of the 20th century. (The Kennedy-esque Lindsay was as WASP as they come; his maternal line had been in America since the 1660s).

In reviewing a book by one of Lindsay’s lieutenant’s, Henry A. Giroux defines the liberal dilemma as a fundamental inability to challenge the political and economic system that creates injustice and inequality, “especially since they have shared in the economic benefits and held political power” in that system. This ambivalence, in Giroux’s view, was fatal for Lindsay, who first came to political prominence in the “Silk Stocking” district of Manhattan’s East Side, one of the most affluent in the city. The fate of liberalism itself since the tumultuous Sixties may have been pre-figured in Lindsay’s career.

Robert F. Wagner

After being elected mayor in 1954, Wagner, a soft-spoken man, fortified his popularity with the voters by such acts as granting collective bargaining rights to municipal labour unions, demolishing slums, and commissioning public housing. He also promoted the arts, helping to establish the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, engaging in the fight to save Carnegie Hall from demolition, and introducing free Shakespearean productions in Central Park. His civil rights record was uneven; he appointed members of minority groups to government posts, but his administration pursued a policy of suppressing homosexuals and their gathering places.

Wagner began distancing himself from Tammany Hall in 1958 and aligned himself with political reformers. By the time he successfully sought reelection in 1961, the break was final. After leaving the mayor’s office, Wagner was a partner in a New York law firm

(from 1972) and served as ambassador to Spain (1968–69) and presidential envoy to the Vatican (1978–80).

Fiorello La Guardia

Fiorello La Guardia, in full Fiorello Henry La Guardia, also called Fiorello H. La Guardia, (born December 11, 1882, New York, New York, U.S.—died September 20, 1947, New York), American politician and lawyer who served three terms (1933–45) as mayor of New York City.

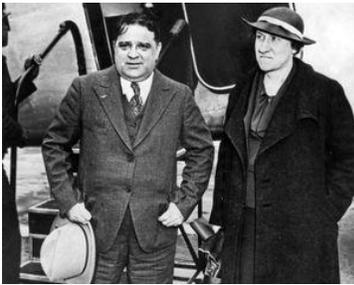
La Guardia was reared in Arizona and at the age of 16 moved with his family to his mother's hometown of Trieste (now in Italy). He was employed at the U.S. consulates at Budapest and Fiume (now Rijeka, Croatia) before returning to the United States in 1906. While working at Ellis Island as an interpreter for the U.S. Immigration Service, he studied law at New York University and was admitted to the bar in 1910.



La Guardia was elected to the House of Representatives as a progressive Republican in 1916, but his term was interrupted by service as a pilot in World War I. He was returned to Congress in 1918 and, after serving as president of the New York City board of aldermen in 1920–21, was reelected to the House in 1922. He was reelected four more times, and in the House he opposed Prohibition and supported woman suffrage and child-labour laws. He cosponsored the Norris–La Guardia Act (1932), which restricted the courts' power to ban or restrain strikes, boycotts, or picketing by organized labour.



National Recovery Administration



Fiorello H. La Guardia and his wife, Marie, in Kansas City, Mo., en route to Prescott, Ariz., c. 1936.

In 1933 La Guardia ran successfully for mayor of New York on a reform platform, supported by both the Republican Party and the upstart City Fusion Party, that was dedicated to unseating Tammany Hall (the Democratic organization in New York) and ending its corrupt practices. As mayor, La Guardia earned a national reputation as an honest and nonpartisan reformer dedicated to civic improvement. He was an able and indefatigable administrator who obtained a new city charter, fought corrupt politicians and organized crime, improved the operations of the police and fire departments, expanded the city's social welfare services, and began slum-clearance and low-cost-housing programs. Among his building projects were the La Guardia Airport and numerous roads and bridges. A colourful figure with a flair for the dramatic, La Guardia became known as "The Little Flower" in token of his first name.

After being reelected twice, La Guardia in 1945 refused to run for a fourth term as mayor. He was appointed director of the U.S. Office of Civilian Defense (1941) and director general (1946) of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.

Source: [Wikipedia](#)