

December 10, 2021

Contact:

Redmond Haskins, The Legal Aid Society ([rhaskins@legal-aid.org](mailto:rhaskins@legal-aid.org))

Sam McCann, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem ([SMccann@ndsny.org](mailto:SMccann@ndsny.org))

Daniel Ball, Brooklyn Defender Services ([DBall@bds.org](mailto:DBall@bds.org))

Chi Nguyen, The Bronx Defenders ([cnguyen@bronxdefenders.org](mailto:cnguyen@bronxdefenders.org))

Lupe Todd-Medina, New York County Defender Services ([LToddmedina@nycds.org](mailto:LToddmedina@nycds.org))

Hettie Powell, Queens Defenders ([hpowell@queensdefenders.org](mailto:hpowell@queensdefenders.org))

**\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\***

## ***NYC Defenders' Statement on the Death of Malcolm Boatwright in DOC Custody***

**(NEW YORK, NY) – Brooklyn Defender Services, The Bronx Defenders, The Legal Aid Society, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, New York County Defender Services, and Queens Defenders** released the following statement following the death of Malcolm Boatwright in DOC custody. Mr. Boatwright was the 15th incarcerated person to die in New York City in the last year:

“The tragedy of Malcolm Boatwright's death today during his incarceration on Rikers Island is the latest horrifying consequence of the city and state’s failure to address the abysmal conditions that have now claimed the lives of 15 people this year. How many people must die for things to change? In the past year, people suffering in NYC jails have pleaded with the media to share their stories, demanded that policymakers take action, and implored judges to stop setting bail. And yet, people continue to die in NYC custody at a rate of more than one a month, and thousands experience daily suffering and dangerous conditions. Just one week ago, a court found that the Department of Correction had failed in its duty to provide people in city jails access to necessary medical care, and yet today we are mourning Mr. Boatwright’s death from ‘a medical issue.’

New York City failed Malcolm Boatwright. The problems began long before he arrived on Rikers Island and are endemic to the City’s failure to provide the basic human services that people need. Rather than providing Malcolm access to critical resources so he could thrive, he was locked away in a decrepit jail that ultimately caused his death at age 28.

Elected officials and law enforcement leadership use fear-mongering and lies about bail reform, pre-trial detention, and conditions of confinement while District Attorneys and judges continue to increase the number of people subjected to the utterly horrific conditions that are causing indescribable harm and death.

We call on every person with power over New York City’s jails - at the City, State and Federal level - to stem the flow of people from our communities into putrid, unsafe cages. We are asking Mayor-elect Eric Adams to immediately take action to remedy the over-use of pre-trial detention and improve conditions for people in the NYC jails. This must be the first priority immediately upon taking office. Certainly those currently in a position to make changes have utterly failed; they have Malcolm Boatwright’s and 14 others’ blood on their hands.”

\*\*\*