

FROM THE DESK OF
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July 16, 2020

The Honorable Governor Phil Murphy
The State House
225 State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Re: Commutation of sentence - Sundiata Acoli (fka Clark Squire) Reg. #39794-066
Dear Governor Murphy,

I write to strongly urge you to release Sundiata Acoli (fka Clark Squire) from prison. Having served 47 years behind bars and miraculously reached the golden age of 83, it is unquestionable that he has paid his debt to society and that the humane, just and moral thing to do is send him home to his family.

I, and many others who have written to you in support of Sundiata's release, are aware of his many programs and certificates, stellar prison record for 27 years, multiple parole denials, frightening bout with COVID19 and his important role as a moral compass for younger men incarcerated in the Bureau of Prisons. However, as someone who is only ten years younger than Sundiata, I feel it is also important for me to share with you the historical context from which he comes and who he was BEFORE his incarceration. Sundiata was born in 1937, in the segregated small town of Vernon just south of the Texas panhandle. His mother was a domestic and his father was a railroad section hand. At age 15, Sundiata was so bright and accomplished that he was admitted into Prairie View A&M College where he excelled in mathematics. He graduated in 1956 at age 19 with a BS in mathematics and a minor in French. This was an incredible accomplishment for a young Black man in the segregated South of the 1950's.

He went on to pursue an impressive career in mathematics and computer science. Sundiata was hired as a Computer Programmer Mathematician by NASA-Edwards AFB in California where he worked along-side several astronauts, most notably Neil Armstrong. Later Sundiata worked in New York for Rome Air Development Center at Griffiss AFB, Republic Aviation Corp, Airborne Instruments Laboratory and Computer Applications, Inc. He continued his education in New York taking graduate courses at Syracuse University and New York University and bought a home in Long Island, NY.

However, the plight of Black people in the deep South where they were not allowed to vote and were terribly mistreated, troubled him deeply. He could not ignore the daily images of

fire hoses and German Shepard dogs used to attack Black people trying to vote. He couldn't escape the lynching parties or the horribly disfigured body of young Emmett Till who in 1955 was attacked by an angry mob of white men who beat and murdered him for allegedly whistling at a white woman. The murder of civil rights workers, Goodman, Chaney and Schwerner had perhaps the most profound impact on Sundiata, and in 1964 he went to Parola County in the Mississippi Delta to register Black people to vote. He witnessed many racist atrocities in the South before finally returning to New York.

Now, as an elder in failing health who has spent almost a half century behind bars, probably Sundiata's only chance to live his last years in dignity rests with you. As an actor and world recognized voice for social justice, I implore you to exercise your executive authority and send Sundiata home to live with and be cared for by his family.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Danny Glover".

Danny Glover
Board Chair