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ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303

September 8, 1966

Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr.
City of Atlanta
City Hall
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Dear Ivan:

I want to express to you my personal appreciation of the fine job which you have done in coping with problems arising out of the firemen's strike and the racial disorders earlier this week. At all times, you have been dignified and fair in your approach, but when necessary, you have shown that you can also be firm.

In dealing with large groups or masses of people in an emotionally-charged atmosphere, good leadership demands not only a willingness to be conciliatory and understanding of the other fellow's problems, but also letting everyone know that unreasonable and disorderly actions will not be tolerated. You have certainly displayed these qualities to an admirable degree under very trying circumstances.

I think one of the tragic mistakes made by the city administrations and police officials in other cities where these riots have gotten out of hand has been to temporize and tolerate too much from the radical extremist leaders. This enables the radical leader to grow in strength in the eyes of the mob, and he becomes doubly difficult to deal with later on. Also, in these other cities, they allowed themselves to be persuaded to withdraw police enforcement and protection at the outset of the trouble, thus leaving the arena completely dominated by the radical leaders and with no law and order there to give aid and comfort to the decent Negro citizens. Fortunately for us, you and Chief Jenkins did not make these tactical mistakes, for had you done so, the radical leaders would have had a clear field in which to gain momentum for their disorders, and it would have been a thousandfold more difficult for the police to go back in and quell the disorders at a later date.

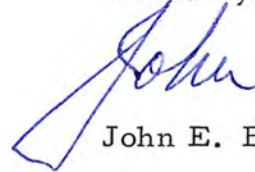
Although things have quieted down and seem to be in good shape today on the racial front, we will all be hoping and praying that no further trouble arises. I feel a lot better about the situation knowing that you and Chief Jenkins are following a wise course in displaying the qualities of good leadership which are so desperately needed in these situations. I am proud of the fact that so many of our decent Negro citizens had the courage and good sense

to deplore the violent approach to the solution of racial problems advocated by Stokely Carmichael and SNCC, but many of these Negro leaders could not have spoken out effectively if our City Government had not provided a proper atmosphere and demonstrated that these citizens would be backed up by a City policy of fairness and firmness which would not permit the radicals to take over.

I am sorry I allowed this letter to get too long. But I just wanted you and Chief Jenkins to know that your attitudes and actions are deeply appreciated during these turbulent crises.

With warm regards and best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left and then loops back under the name.

John E. Branch

JEB:lew

cc: Chief Herbert Jenkins
Atlanta Police Department
Atlanta, Georgia