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ATLANTA LEGAL AID SOCIETY, INC.

501 FULTON COUNTY COURT HOUSE

ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303

March 29, 1968

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The Mayor of the City of Atlanta  
City Hall  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Dear Mayor Allen:

As you may know, the Atlanta Legal Aid Society has recently embarked upon a significant expansion of its services, raising the number of its offices from three to six and the size of its legal staff from ten to twenty-two. This expansion has been made possible not only by the generosity of the city, the county and the United Appeal, but also by the hundreds of individual citizens who have volunteered their time, and money, for the benefit of the Society and its clients. Perhaps most important of all, our grant from OEO has now been increased to approximately \$355,000.00 per year, making out total budget for 1968 almost \$525,000.00.

The Legal Aid Society is dedicated to representing and providing advocacy for the thousands of indigents who come through its doors each year. But as an OEO funded program, we have a larger responsibility than merely providing services to large numbers of people. We must, as a matter of policy and wisdom, remain in touch with the grievances of our client population, and we must provide a legitimate, constructive and controlled outlet for those grievances. Simply put, because we oppose riots, we must utilize our talents and facilities to prevent them.

The purpose of this letter is to acquaint you with these views, and to place at your disposal the entire resources of the Atlanta Legal Aid Society for the resolution of any grievances known to you or your administration that affects our client population.

The Legal Aid Society has a long record of service to the poor people of Fulton County. In past years, it has represented tens of thousands of indigents, and in recent weeks it has recorded some exciting new triumphs, including its successful attack on the State's substitute father rule. According to Director Burson, that one lawsuit gave immediate benefits to some 1,500 persons who would otherwise have been denied welfare.

The Mayor of the City of Atlanta

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I think it can fairly be said that we have begun to establish our credentials with the poor of our city, and I hope our reputation with our client population will grow as time goes on.

But it is equally important that we make clear our respect for and dedication to the welfare of the city of Atlanta. Specifically, I have enclosed for your interest a copy of a resolution enacted by the OEO Project Directors Advisory Committee indicating some of the ways in which legal services programs can be useful to cities in riot prevention. I would like to take this opportunity to urge you or your staff to call upon me or any member of my staff to assist you in implementing these suggestions, or for any other reason you may deem appropriate.

As you know, our obligations to our clients may require us at some time to disagree with the city on certain matters. We may even find ourselves on opposite sides of an issue in a court of law. I can assure you that I will be at pains to avoid any such disagreements with the city, and should a disagreement ever arise between us, it will be handled by this office in a manner consistent with the spirit of this letter: a spirit of respect for the city and dedication to the interests of our clients.

I look forward to meeting you in the near future.

Sincerely,



Michael D. Padnos  
Director

MDP:lw  
Encls.