

DEFENDER ASSOCIATION OF PHILADELPHIA

1441 Sansom Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102-3004
(215) 568-3190 (215) 988-0208 fax

KEIR BRADFORD-GREY
CHIEF DEFENDER

March 15, 2021

To the Defender Board of Directors:

It is with pride and humility that, as of April 15, 2021, I am resigning as the Chief Defender of the Defender Association of Philadelphia.

I have truly appreciated the opportunity to lead the fine institution where I began my legal career in 1999. The legal experience I was able to receive during my time as an assistant public defender honed me as both a lawyer with keen litigation instincts and as an effective legal strategist. When I returned to lead the Defender Association in September 2015, eight years to the day after my first departure, it was with the understanding of the importance of our mission and the potential of our impact on our communities that had been first nurtured within the Defender Association itself. I treasure that foundational experience, and it is why I have such mixed emotions about ending my career as a defender now.

I took the role as Chief Defender at a time where the future of criminal justice in our City, State and Country was at stake. I knew it was our time to lead and we did — working towards a vision of a participatory justice system built to improve all aspects of public safety. The work was guided and driven by rigorous transformative principles that I asked of myself and my team that we perform with the values of integrity, equity and courage in all we did. Each day, we sought to advocate, empower and deliver for the people. Our work enhanced our trial advocacy. Our work also shaped the understanding of the Defender's role in the public safety sphere. Over time, we have changed the function and the narrative of how our work contributes to enhanced public safety — evolving what had historically been a reactive role to our criminal justice system into an expanded service, with a proactive role in our justice practices.

We created a service delivery model that understands the needs of the people in the communities and we built those needs into the system's process. We also worked strategically with communities to empower them to advocate for better and fairer outcomes from their elected officials. We worked with those same elected officials and educated them on the framework of justice reform, to help them understand how smart and effective justice practices can lift many out of the poverty trap and cyclical involvement with the justice system. These efforts have gained us the respect and value we deserve from our funders, who supported and increased our budget to allow us to develop our presence in multiple areas of growth, from our national profile to our local community service.

With their support, we have achieved concrete results, and each shift in perception, from public and funders alike, has been reinvested in changing the context we work in and driving our efforts to further that change. As a keynote, providing parity to our lawyers, long a desire for public defenders, was

advanced under our watch. From increasing our technology to advance data analysis and courtroom advocacy, to achieving a national profile for our staff and work. We have sought to not only meet operational standards, but to set them.

Our progress has not waivered. Our system is now focusing on alternatives to our traditional model of justice to be less destructive — and more constructive — in our quest for public safety. While our work is not finished, I know the structure we've built will stand as a beacon into the future, allowing the Defender's voice to lead for years to come.

Ultimately, I am most proud of the way we have garnered the trust and respect of our communities. We helped create nine community justice hubs to work with the Defender. Their pursuit and achievement of better defenses and outcomes is remarkable. The value of this collaborative relationship has proven to be effective in avoiding wrongful convictions and making sure the system's response to behaviors are proportionate and reasonable, as well as working to create alternative options to the justice system that rely on community resources. The trust and respect from the community we serve is the most powerful force we have to remove the stigma of the common public perception of public defenders. I defined that here.

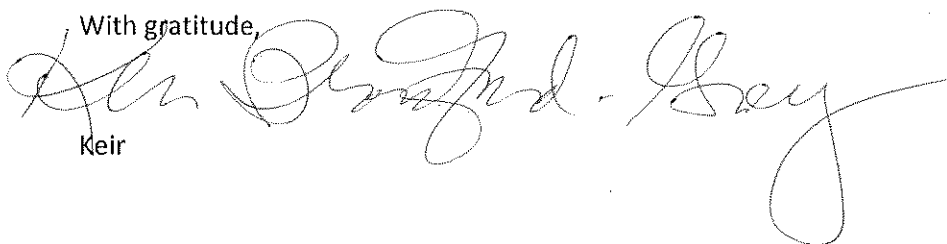
I am truly grateful for the partnership of staff members who embraced our transformative principles and worked tirelessly to create an office that not only produces excellent legal analysis and advocacy in the courtroom on behalf of the voiceless, but also creates space and agency for the people we serve to have a voice in the process.

The work is never easy, but it is easier with shared purpose. It brought me great pride to watch our staff lead during times of tremendous hardship and crisis. Not only did we carry our city, we modeled behaviors of principled leadership and advanced a sensible approach to solving our challenges — not allowing others to rush into ineffective or unsustainable solutions. We have led justice reform and I am confident that the people who remain will continue to lead in the justice reform space.

It has been my privilege to lead. I have spoken of the enrichment the Defender Association gave me as an emerging leader, and now, as a seasoned leader, I can state with confidence that this experience is something I will carry with me in all my future leadership roles. I want to thank the board members who served as mentors and gave me support when I really needed it. I know we've made the people we serve proud and I am sure with your leadership we will continue to do so.

While this is the end of my career as Chief Defender, I will always be a defender at heart.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alan Donald Bay". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name "Alan Donald Bay".

Alan Donald Bay
Keir