

# **JUSTICE ADVOCATES**

**CITIZENS ALERT AND POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY**

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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS Social Policy and Research  
AT CHICAGO  
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## By Charles Hounmenou, PhD

### About the Center

The Jane Addams Center for Social Policy and Research brings together the resources of academic institutions and community groups to advance social welfare policies and programs that meet the needs of urban communities, especially poor families and children. The Center conducts research and evaluation studies, analyzes public policies, holds forums on important policy issues, and tests new program models and service delivery strategies. The Center's Justice Advocates Program focuses on social work, families, and the criminal justice system.

### About the Author

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## INTRODUCTION

The Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois at Chicago is pleased to join with Citizens Alert in celebrating more than 40 years of advocacy for police reform and accountability in the city of Chicago. Our shared goal of advancing social justice and social reform in the spirit of Jane Addams, the College's namesake, has fostered many important connections. Together we have sponsored community forums, supported the development of a citywide coalition on police accountability, and facilitated the transfer of the Citizens Alert archives to the University of Illinois at Chicago Library. I have a personal connection also, having served a term on the Citizens Alert Board of Directors.

*Justice Advocates: Citizens Alert and Police Accountability* is a collaborative product of Citizens Alert and the College's Jane Addams Center for Social Policy and Research. The booklet documents major changes in police accountability in Chicago and describes incidents and actions that led to those changes. At the center of almost all of those reforms and changes was Citizens Alert, a small grassroots organization led by dedicated volunteers who envisioned justice for all Chicago's citizens. While the booklet is about the past it is also, in many ways, a blueprint for the future for both civic leaders and ordinary citizens.

**Creasie Finney Hairston, PhD**

Dean and Professor, Jane Addams College of Social Work  
Director, Jane Addams Center for Social Policy and Research  
November 2012

## THE FRED HAMPTON ASSASSINATION CASE

At dawn on December 4, 1969, 14 heavily armed police officers stormed Fred Hampton's apartment at 2337 Monroe Street, Chicago. Hampton was deputy chairman of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party (BPP), a party involved in social activism and empowerment programs for black communities throughout the nation. The assault squad shot dead Mark Clark, a BPP leader from the Northern Illinois chapter. They wounded the previously drugged 21-year old Hampton while he was asleep in his bed.

"An independent analysis of Fred's blood done at the Cook County Hospital showed that he had a large amount of the depressant drug secobarbital in his system. And you can't find anybody....who said that Fred ever used drugs,"<sup>1</sup> said Flint Taylor of the People's Law Office. On realizing that he was still alive, the officers shot him in the head. An autopsy later showed that Hampton had been shot twice in the head, point-blank.<sup>2</sup> Four other people in the apartment were seriously wounded.

The police raid created an unprecedented public uproar and a great movement of solidarity within the black community. The official version of the raid provided by Cook County State's Attorney Edward Hanrahan, in a press conference, stated that the BPP activists were harboring illegal weapons. He alleged that the assault team had been attacked by the people in the raided apartment and had defended themselves accordingly.<sup>3</sup>

Photographic evidence was presented depicting bullet holes allegedly made by shots fired by the Panthers. This information was later debunked by black leaders who conducted

tours of the raided apartment, pointing out the bullet holes. In fact, more than 100 bullets were fired into the apartment occupied by the Panthers, and only one shot could be attributed to anyone inside the raided apartment. For John Hill, the director of the Alliance to End Repression (AER)<sup>4</sup>, "The slaying of the two Panther leaders was like the ultimate in repression. This really got a lot of people off the fence."<sup>5</sup>

Mary Powers, then president of the Winnetka Human Relations Committee, one of the groups the BPP reached out to for a tour of the bullet-riddled apartment, stated: "You could see all the bullet holes. There was no question that what happened was wrong."<sup>6</sup> She also commented: "I had no perspective on police. I never even thought about them. The authorities portrayed Fred Hampton's death as a gun battle."<sup>7</sup> Powers decided then to join any group aiming to fight police brutality and found Citizens Alert.

Citizens Alert was at the forefront of the public campaign that successfully rebutted the official version about the police raid and assassination of Hampton and Clark. According to Taylor, effective communication played a critical part in exposing Cook County State Attorney Hanrahan's lies about the incident. There were four newspapers in Chicago at that time. "The campaign for information and disinformation about the raid was unbelievably intense for a month,"<sup>8</sup> Taylor said. "It was a battle between the Cook County State's Attorney and the Chicago Police Department (CPD) on one hand, and community organizations on the other hand, to convince the general public about whether it was a shoot-out between the police and the Black Panthers, or whether it was a plotted killing by the State Attorney's office, the



Courtesy of Paul Sequeira

Black Panther Party Defense Minister Bobby Rush, left, and Party Deputy Chapter Chairman Fred Hampton at the Party's office at 2350 W. Madison, Chicago, February 1969.



Courtesy of Paul Sequeira

Bedroom of Fred Hampton after the December 4, 1969 predawn raid by Chicago police.

CPD and the FBI,” he added. Citizens Alert, together with partner organizations including the N.A.A.C.P. and the Afro-American Patrolman’s League (known today as the African American Police League) succeeded in this major information battle by getting most newspapers to articulate what had really happened.<sup>9</sup>

The successful information campaign and the ensuing political movement had several important results:

- It led to the appointment of a special prosecutor to investigate Hampton and Clark’s assassinations.
- It resulted in the dismissal of the indictment of the four Black Panthers who survived the police raid.
- Hanrahan and the police officers involved in the raid—previously exonerated of any wrongdoing by an internal police investigation—were indicted, yet not for murder or attempted murder but only for obstruction of justice. The judge in the case acquitted all of them.
- The information campaign boosted the civil rights lawsuit that Taylor and his colleague Jeff Haas from the People’s Law Office brought against the City of Chicago on behalf of Hampton’s family and other victims of the infamous police assault. The two lawyers uncovered the fact that the CPD and the Cook County State’s Attorney’s office had acted in conspiracy with the federal government through the FBI’s Cointelpro (Counter Intelligence Program).<sup>10</sup>

The Fred Hampton lawsuit case ended in 1983 with an almost \$2.0 million settlement on behalf of Hampton and Clark’s families and the survivors of the police raid. In 1990, the Chicago City Council passed a resolution declaring “Fred Hampton Day” in honor of the murdered BPP leader.

The Fred Hampton assassination had three implications for Citizens Alert. First, it was the most decisive, motivating factor in reenergizing Citizens Alert with the arrival of new members determined to fight police repression. Second, it pushed the organization into a more active, visible leadership role against police brutality. Third, it allowed the organization to play a vanguard role in the successful information campaign that helped expose the political conspiracy behind the killings and boosted the civil lawsuit on behalf of the victims.

## CITIZENS ALERT AND THE CHICAGO POLICE BOARD

Before the 1970s, few Chicago residents were aware of the existence of the Chicago Police Board (CPB), and most people knew almost nothing about its meetings and functions.<sup>11</sup> One day in June 1970, after inquiring about the Board, 15 members of Citizens Alert and the Alliance to End Repression went to Chicago Police Department (CPD) headquarters and asked for directions to the Board meeting room. At first, the five Police Board members were taken aback at the sudden interest of any Chicago resident to attend their meetings. “The five-member board was dumbfounded when we all walked in,”<sup>12</sup> Powers recalled. “This had never happened before, and they couldn’t understand why anyone would even be interested.” Thus, they were very reluctant to let these newcomers attend the session. They tried to discourage the group from attending the meeting under the pretext that Police Board meetings were not open to the public.<sup>13</sup>

The group strategically retreated and came to the next Police Board meeting armed with copies of the state statute that created the CPB as a public entity, and the Illinois Open Meetings Act of July 1957. The Illinois Open Meeting Act<sup>14</sup> states that all meetings of public bodies shall be open to the public, with only a few specific exceptions. To circumvent the determination of those community representatives to participate in this meeting, the Police Board members argued that the room was too small to accommodate the group. The representatives agreed to sit on the floor and windowsills, or just stand. “We said, ‘We’d be back next time with an even larger group of observers. We want to be educated,’”<sup>15</sup> Powers said. Subsequently, the monthly Police Board meetings were moved from its traditional small



Source: Citizens Alert archives

Mary Powers (center), Citizens Alert’s coordinator, looking on at a public meeting of the Chicago Police Board, 1979.

room to the auditorium on the fifth floor of Central Police Headquarters, at 1121 South State Street, which could accommodate a large number of people.

The participation of community representatives in CPB meetings resulted in important adjustments to the ways the Board functioned. The board meetings, which used to last less than 15 minutes or less in the past, began taking up to an hour and a half. The board members were political appointees who would review and approve, in an expedited manner, policies, regulations and recommendations regarding the management of the CPD. “Board procedure was not difficult to follow. Everything [Police Superintendent] Conlisk put before the members was passed unanimously without comment or discussion. The meeting lasted 10 minutes,”<sup>16</sup> Powers said. “When we began in 1970, there was no direct police accountability to the public and, practically speaking, no recognized procedure for a community organization to influence police policy or effectively petition against abuse of police authority,”<sup>17</sup> Powers added. Citizens Alert succeeded in getting the CPB to shift from a traditionally passive role of being a rubber stamp for police superintendents and political leaders to an actual decision-making, executive body for police governance. The organization’s aims in attending meetings of the Police Board were to insert a “reality factor” in the monthly meetings and to have the board become a forum for neighborhood problems that could not be resolved at the local police district level.<sup>18</sup>

Thanks to a request by Citizens Alert, the last part of the board meeting was reserved for questions from community representatives. In February 1974, the Police Board be-

gan allowing direct discussions with the police superintendent immediately after his periodical report. Testimonies at the meetings allowed Police Board members to become more aware about people’s experiences of police brutality and broaden their perspectives of community-police relationships in their decision-making process. Citizens Alert used the forum of these meetings to make a difference in some neighborhoods and communities experiencing police misconduct. An example of this role occurred in March 1977 in Altgeld Gardens, a Chicago Housing Authority project, where police failed to address recurrent issues of gang activities.<sup>19</sup> Thanks to Citizens Alert’s testimonies in Police Board meetings, residents of the housing project started receiving better police services, with more visible police patrols and the departure of gangs that used to be a threat to the only neighborhood supermarket.<sup>20</sup>

However, despite community participation in CPB meetings, until the early 1980s the board was still hesitant about asserting its statutory authority in an independent manner. The composition of the Board itself was still far from being representative of Chicago demographics. Important areas of Chicago that had major law enforcement problems had never had any representation on the Board. In 1971, at a meeting with Mayor Richard J. Daley, Citizens Alert’s representatives requested the expansion of the Police Board to reflect the demography of the City of Chicago. Yet, no change occurred until 1977 when Citizens Alert initiated a citywide campaign to have the Board expanded from five to nine members. This campaign eventually paid off in November 1979 when Mayor Jane Byrne implemented the expansion.<sup>21</sup>

## ACCOUNTABILITY SESSIONS WITH POLICE SUPERINTENDENTS

Although public participation in CPB meetings allows community groups' input in discussions of police issues, they do not necessarily provide opportunities for a full exchange of ideas on specific policies because of their format and duration. Thus, early in its participation in those meetings, Citizens Alert negotiated to have "accountability sessions" between community representatives and the police superintendent on a quarterly basis. The main purpose of the accountability sessions was to draw the attention of the superintendent and deputy superintendents to community problems not being addressed at the police district level and to develop close collaboration between police officials and citizen groups to improve law enforcement services.

The first accountability session took place on July 3, 1974, with Superintendent James Rochford accompanied by two deputy superintendents. The community delegation led by Citizens Alert at this first session included representatives of Kenwood Oakland Community Organization, Midwest Community Council, Archdiocesan Latin American Committee, and American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).<sup>22</sup> The various issues discussed during the quarterly accountability meetings with Superintendent Rochford in the late 1970s and early 1980s included psychological testing of police candidates, discriminatory hiring practices of the CPD, and police brutality in some neighborhoods. Accountability sessions with police superintendents helped address specific issues of police abuse. For example, in 1984, following a Citizens Alert's complaint to Superintendent Fred Rice about the way an investigator of the CPD's Office of Police Standards mishandled the investigation of the fatal shooting of Arluster Walker, a young African American, the investigator was immediately



CPD Community Services—Official Photo

Citizens Alert's Executive Director Ruth Wells speaking at an accountability session with CPD's Deputy Superintendent Sam Nolan, in the presence of community representatives including Citizens Alert's board members Rev. Willie Baker (on the left) and Mary Powers (far right), 1976.

removed from the case and was subsequently fired. Citizens Alert also went to Superintendent Rice with concerned community residents requesting that the police officer involved in the shooting incident be transferred to another district while the investigation was pending, and this request was also granted.

There was considerable cooperation between police superintendents and Citizens Alert. This collaboration can be explained by the non-confrontational approach the organization's leaders often use when dealing with police officials. "We don't consider the police an enemy in spite of some of the bad things individual police officers do,"<sup>23</sup> said Juanita van Dorn, a retired Major of the U.S. Air Force and former Citizens Alert Board President. "Some other citizen groups working on criminal justice issues tend to take a hard line. We really try to work more positively with the police." Almost all police superintendents with whom Citizens Alert worked acknowledged the organization's constructive contributions to police accountability in the City of Chicago. According to Superintendent Rice, "Public accountability is crucial for the proper functioning of any police department. Citizens Alert's efforts to increase police accountability in Chicago have been both effective and responsible. It has a most important role to play."<sup>24</sup> Superintendent Matt Rodriguez concurred:

We, in policing find ourselves at a crossroads. More and more we find ourselves turning to the community we serve to form partnerships.... Citizens Alert has long kept the pulse on police conduct, and thus, has contributed to an environment that will be more receptive for the needed change.<sup>25</sup>

In more encompassing terms, former Cook County Sheriff Richard Elrod argued:

"It is very important that all public officials and public agencies have an organization, such as Citizens Alert

that is looking at their performance and acts as a liaison with people who don't necessarily see eye to eye with the public official, whatever their responsibilities... to bridge the gap between people who aren't necessarily interested in working within our governmental system and those government officials who usually are unwilling to listen to the other side. I think Citizens Alert has accomplished their purpose in numerous ways."<sup>26</sup>

Nevertheless, although Citizens Alert was largely viewed as offering an appropriate forum where both community members and the police could express their concerns, the organization's relations with the police were not without antipathy, especially from the Fraternal Order of the Police (FOP). The interaction with the Chicago lodge of the FOP was not easy. The police union could be considered a major obstacle to Citizens Alert's advocacy for police accountability in Chicago. The union often viewed Citizens Alert's initiatives or programs as threats to the effectiveness of the police force. According to John Dineen, then president of the FOP, "They [Citizens Alert] make accusations left and right, but they never get a conviction. They seem to be more of an anti-police group than a police watchdog group."<sup>27</sup>

On the whole, Citizens Alert's experience of participation in meetings with police leaders demonstrates the possibility of cooperation between citizen groups and the police to constructively discuss concerns of police misconduct. This experience shows that community organizations can make important contributions to police reforms by trying to meet police leaders on their turf, by documenting community concerns and demands; and by using, whenever possible, a non-confrontational approach in the search for information or solutions to their concerns. Citizens Alert's leaders rarely missed opportunities of meetings with police leaders to discuss police issues affecting Chicago residents. The organization often influenced decisions made by the Police Board

by gathering promising practices from other big cities, contrasting them with practices inside the CPD, and making recommendations for reforms. “Citizens Alert is well-known and respected by the Chicago Police Board and ‘the top-brass,’ because the directors get their facts, do their home-

work, and can document their arguments,”<sup>28</sup> said Lt. Arthur P. Lindsay, former board member of Citizens Alert and past president of the Guardians Police Organization, a national organization that advocates against discrimination against blacks on the police force.

## FROM THE CORONER SYSTEM TO THE MEDICAL EXAMINER SYSTEM IN COOK COUNTY



Source: Citizens Alert's archives

From the left, Mary Powers, Citizens Alert's board member; Dr. Robert Stein, Cook County Medical Examiner; Roy Dames, Medical Examiner's Office staff; and Dr. Edmund Donoghue, Chief Deputy Medical Examiner, 1981.

In 1976, a major change occurred in the criminal justice system in Cook County: A Medical Examiner's Office was established to replace the obsolete Cook County Coroner's Office. Citizens Alert, then a leading member organization in the Alliance to End Repression (AER), spearheaded the successful five-year campaign that brought about this major shift. For more than a hundred years, the Office of Cook County Coroner, established in 1872, was responsible for inquiring into the cause and manner of deaths when the cir-

cumstances were suspicious, obscure, or mysterious. Under the Coroner system, a six-member jury ruled on the causes of deaths in police custody.

When Citizens Alert's members began attending the inquests done by the Coroner's Office, they realized that, even when there was evidence of gross police misconduct, Dr. Andrew Toman, then Cook County Coroner, and his jury rarely considered it. Similar to the experience with the CPB, community representatives were not welcome at the Coroner's inquests, but they were aware that the Illinois Open Meetings Act allowed them to attend its meetings. Strategies used to bring changes at the Police Board were helpful in the campaign for the termination of the Coroner system. However, it was a far bigger challenge to have the over 100-year-old system replaced by a completely new one. It was the first time in the history of the nation that a coroner system was threatened with being wiped out.

The debate over reforming the Coroner's Office was initiated earlier, in July 1971, when the Chicago Law Enforcement Study Group (CLESG) released a research report titled "An Inquest on the Cook County Coroner." The report accused the coroner's inquests of being "a rubber stamp" for the wrongdoings of the CPD. The report documented the incompetence of the Office and its complete lack of independence from the police department and the Office of the Cook County State's Attorney.<sup>29</sup> The Coroner's Office was likely to term the death of people in police custody "justifiable homicide," and the State's Attorney, relying on these findings, would decline to conduct further investigations. The

U.S. Attorney would generally not investigate such deaths unless a strong case was made that federal civil rights statutes were violated. Families of persons killed by police officers, though not confident justice had been done, would not know how to seek a full and proper investigation of the facts. Richard Criley, executive director of the Committee to Defend the Bill of Rights, and Mary Powers of Citizens Alert argued that almost every inquest into the death of a black or a Latino at the hands of the police proved that the Coroner's Office was just a "white-washing machine."<sup>30</sup> Since the coroner was an elected official, his affiliation with the major political party helped him secure or maintain that position. Thus, due to political influences, the likelihood of cover-ups was always very high.

Shortly after the CLESG report, the AER asked the Coroner's Office to discover rather than suppress facts in cases where civilians were killed by the police. These efforts brought sustained pressure on the Office and its source of funds, the Cook County Board of Commissioners. Then, the AER proposed a four-point proposal for a short-term reform of the office. After several months of trying to eschew the issue, Dr. Toman publicly agreed to adopt the AER's proposal. When the requested changes failed to materialize, the Alliance began to organize civic groups behind proposals that would eliminate the coroner system altogether. Consequently, at the Cook County Board meeting of August 7, 1972 Mary Powers, as vice-president of the AER, read the following resolution proposal for the abolition of the Coroner's Office to be placed on the ballot:

Shall the Office of Coroner of Cook County be eliminated and replaced with a Medical Examiner system headed by a qualified licensed physician to be chosen by the President of the Board of County Commissioners with advice and consent of the Members of the Board of County Commissioners, to be effective December 6, 1976?<sup>31</sup>

On August 16, 1972, the Cook County Board approved the resolution and agreed to let voters decide the fate of the Coroner system. Then, in the general election of November 1972, Cook County residents voted to replace the Office of Coroner with a Medical Examiner system. On July 27, 1976, the Cook County Board of Commissioners adopted the ordinance establishing the Medical Examiner's Office, and inaugurated the new office on December 6, 1976. Just after his appointment, Dr. Robert J. Stein, the first Medical Examiner, met with Citizens Alert board members and credited Powers for the key role her organization played in the campaign for the establishment of the new office.

On November 3, 1981, Powers addressed the National Association of Medical Examiners' annual meeting at the Drake Hotel in Chicago with the topic, "The Public Interest in Public Safety." After the meeting, Dr. Edmund Donoghue, Cook County's deputy Medical Examiner, acknowledging Citizens Alert's significant input in the investigation of police killings, stated:

Cooperation with Citizens Alert has been as beneficial for the police and medical examiner as for the deceased's family. Many times Citizens Alert has served as a calming influence in tense situations. In a number of cases, allegations of abuse by police were unjustified and Citizens Alert was able to help convincingly explain these findings.<sup>32</sup>

Citizens Alert remained active in the investigatory proceedings of sensitive cases by the Office of Medical Examiner, with Powers serving on the Advisory Committee for the Medical Examiner's Office for many years. In contrast to past cover-ups of police killings under the Coroner system, the Medical Examiner's Office not only routinely notifies Citizens Alert of every death in custody, but is also very responsive to family survivors and testifies on sensitive cases.

## THE RED SQUAD POLICE SPYING LAWSUIT CASE

In the 1970s, Chicago had a spying scandal involving the CPD's Subversive Activities Unit of the Chicago Police Intelligence Division known as Red Squad. Under a vague mandate to gather intelligence on organizations and individuals that posed a threat to the security of the country, state, or city, the Red Squad directed its attention at groups and organizations that were involved in lawful socio-political activities.<sup>33</sup> Undercover agents infiltrated many groups with the obvious intent of seeking political rather than criminal information. The point most organizations that were victims of police spying had in common was their open opposition to Mayor Richard J. Daley's policies.<sup>34</sup> Citizens Alert unsuccessfully discussed the spying issue with the superintendent of police, the deputy superintendent in charge of inspectional services, and the CPB.

The Red Squad spying scandal was publicly exposed in March 1974 when Richard Gutman, the lead lawyer for the AER, succeeded in getting a copy of the payroll list of the CPD's intelligence division, which included the Red Squad.<sup>35</sup> From six officers listed under "assignment unknown," two of the Red Squad's secret agents were on the AER's board of directors. Among the police spies who infiltrated Citizens Alert were David Cushing, a police recruit, and Adele Noren, a Chicago South Side housewife. "For a long time we had no idea these people were spying on us. . . . They were the best volunteers we had," Mary Powers said. "They'd come out at any time of day or night and do any kind of work, from sweeping floors to leading demonstrations."<sup>36</sup> Noren stated that she had offered her services as a paid spy for the Red Squad because people connected with Citizens Alert and

the AER had connections with communist-tinged organizations.<sup>37</sup> Her major complaint against Citizens Alert was the group's capacity to invite witnesses to forums like the CPB or the City Council for testimonies about police misconduct.

On November 13, 1974, Citizens Alert and the AER filed the civil rights lawsuit, *Alliance to End Repression et al. vs. James M. Rochford et al.*, in the U.S. District Court in Chicago. The lawsuit was filed on behalf of 18 persons and 15 organizations. A year later, on November 10, 1975, the grand jury appointed for the police spying case issued a report titled, "Improper Police Intelligence Activities," stating:

The evidence has clearly shown that the security section of the Chicago Police Department assaulted the fundamental freedoms of speech, association, press and religion, as well as the constitutional right to privacy of hundreds of individuals.<sup>38</sup>

After 11 years of litigation, a 1985 court decision ended the police's Red Squad's unlawful surveillance of political dissenters and civic organizations. As a result of the suit, the CPD, the FBI, the CIA, and Military Intelligence were prohibited not only from disrupting but also from spying on the political activities of Chicago's citizens and organizations not involved in criminal behavior. In the terms of a court consent decree, the CPD was required to make information in their files available, fully and without restrictions, to an independent auditing firm that would periodically monitor its adherence to the court's requirements and report publicly on its findings.<sup>39</sup>

and methods of gathering intelligence data.

Police must no longer regard a person or organization which questions police conduct as being anti-police or subversive.

We urge the Police Department to consider the following proposals:

(1) *Intelligence Files* Intelligence files should not be kept on persons or organizations unless they are committing or threatening to commit criminal acts, or have a history of criminal activity.

No files should be maintained on any person or organization merely because of the person's position in government or candidacy for public office, nor because of race, creed, ethnic background or political beliefs.

In addition, the existing policy requiring persons seeking intelligence data to display a legitimate law enforcement purpose must be strictly enforced.

Current intelligence files which do not meet these guidelines should be immediately destroyed. All in-

telligence files should be reviewed at least twice yearly to insure removal and destruction of outdated and erroneous material. Cooperating law enforcement agencies should be notified of the destruction of the data.

(2) *Intelligence Personnel Requirements.* No officer should be employed in the intelligence work until he or she has received adequate training as a law enforcement officer.

Intelligence Officers should be schooled in political science, the history of the City of Chicago and American history, including an in-depth study of the United States Constitution, with special emphasis on the Bill of Rights.

#### VI. Conclusion

The Grand Jury wishes to express its gratitude to the State's Attorney and the Assistant State's Attorneys who worked so diligently to aid this Grand Jury in our search for truth.

Because of the gravity of the problems created by improper police

intelligence activity and the dire need to build safeguards for the future, we direct the State's Attorney of Cook County to make this report public.

Recent news media disclosures indicate that the Chicago Police Department may be continuing to abuse its intelligence gathering functions through unwarranted and illegal surveillance and infiltration. These allegations merit an immediate investigation by the State's Attorney to determine the validity of the charges.

As we have emphasized in this report, such conduct by those who have taken an oath to uphold and enforce our laws must not be tolerated in a free society.

The State's Attorney is urged to carefully monitor police intelligence gathering practices to prevent future abuse.

Signed: Sylvester A. Maida, Foreman, Extended March 1973 Cook County Grand Jury. Linda S. Leon, Secretary, Extended March 1973 Cook County Grand Jury.

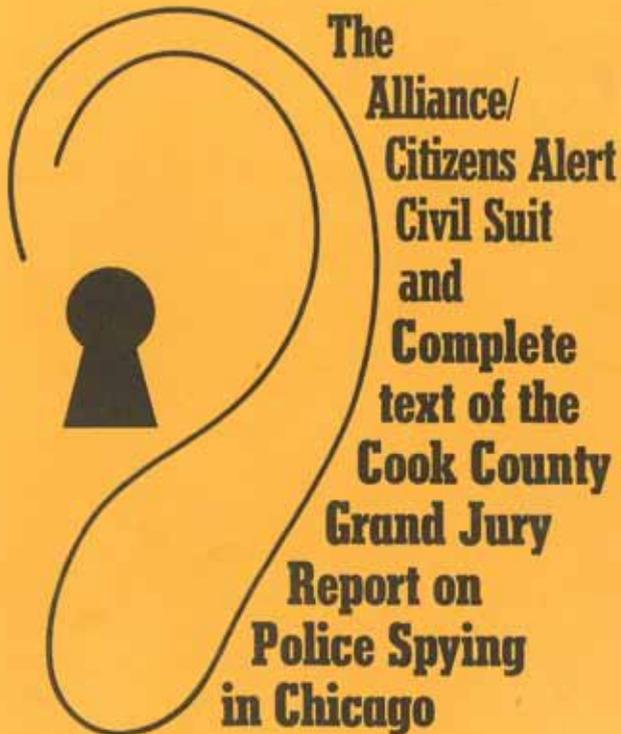
**"The evidence has clearly shown that the security section of the Chicago Police Department assaulted the fundamental freedoms of speech, association, press and religion, as well as the constitutional right to privacy of hundreds of individuals."** — Report of Cook County Grand Jury, Nov. 10, 1973

Your help is needed to end this massive abuse of police power by the City of Chicago.

Send contributions to:

**Citizens Alert — Litigation Fund**  
407 South Dearborn St., Room 500  
Chicago 60605 683-5392

Your Contribution is tax deductible.



## CITIZENS ALERT AND THE BEAT REPRESENTATIVE PROGRAM

The most popular community policing program in many American cities is called the Neighborhood Watch. In Chicago, the equivalent of this program is called CAPS (Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy). CAPS has been in place since April 1993, but it is not the first community policing program in Chicago. It was preceded by the Beat Representative program (also known as Beat Rep program) established in 1974. The City of Chicago consists of 25 police districts, which are divided into 279 police beats. A beat is a small geographic area in the city to which police officers are assigned. The Beat Rep program was a volunteer-based community program whose main goal was to prevent crime in police beats by facilitating communication and improving relations between police officers in the beats and the residents in the officers' target areas. The concept was developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> Chicago police district in 1973 after it was found that meetings between police officers and citizens in two beat areas were proving successful in fighting crime in those areas. On March 14, 1975, the Beat Rep program was implemented throughout the City of Chicago by Superintendent James Rochford, with 2,200 civilian volunteers in the Chicago's 25 police districts to report neighborhood trouble spots and to alert police about community concerns with crime prevention.<sup>40</sup> The program in each district was coordinated by a civilian and a police officer. Funding for 10 police districts was granted by the Illinois Law Enforcement Commission (ILEC), which was responsible for the management of federal funds for crime prevention.

Citizens Alert played a forefront monitoring role for the Beat Rep program. Soon after the program was established, the organization set up the Beat Rep Task Force, which met

twice a month. At that time, many community groups were skeptical about this community policing system initiative. Thus, Citizens Alert encouraged groups to join in helping make the program work and not let it deteriorate into a police surveillance mechanism similar to the Red Squad. The organization urged community representatives to attend police district workshops or become beat representatives. It also sponsored major events to promote the program. For instance, in September 1975, it organized a conference at Chicago's Hyatt-Regency Hotel. The purpose of that meeting, which was attended by representatives of over 60 community organizations and members of the CPD, was to acquaint community representatives with the Beat Rep program. In 1976, representatives from 30 community organizations took part in Citizens Alert's annual conference which focused on the Beat Rep program and Police Board meetings.

In February 1976, Citizens Alert had the Beat Rep program evaluated. Dr. Francis Ulschak, assistant professor at the Department of Industrial Engineering and Management Sciences, Northwestern University, was contacted for that evaluation. The report he and a team of graduate students wrote in June 1976 showed that many community residents were not aware of the work of the Beat Rep program in their neighborhoods. Citizens Alert was later contacted by another evaluation team under the direction of Dr. Leonard Bickman, commissioned by the Illinois Law Enforcement Commission (ILEC) to evaluate the community policing program.

However, Citizens Alert's leaders began having misgivings about the Beat Rep program when the city proposed spending over \$1.5 million of federal money on it. The or-

ganization's leaders believed that introducing such a large amount of money into a primarily volunteer program would corrupt its integrity. Thus, on July 27, 1976, they pointed out that the \$1.6 million Beat Rep grant application then being considered by ILEC would set up a wasteful bureaucracy that would create unnecessary barriers between police officers and civilians. Ruth Wells, then executive director of Citizens Alert, raised this objection in a news conference during which she remarked that "The bulk of the money is to be used to lease office space, make furniture and vehicle purchases and to pay staff salaries,"<sup>41</sup> She recommended that the program should be changed to get rid of its "stool pigeon" image and to encourage community participation.

By late 1978, Citizens Alert's leaders' misgivings about the negative effects of injecting public funding into the Beat Rep program came true. During an ILEC grant application meeting in September 1978, using data from various sources including reports from the CPD and research done by Drs. Ulschak and Bickman, Citizens Alert presented a position paper showing how the Beat Rep program failed in its mission to create effective police-community collaboration in

the fight against crime. First, the program failed to reduce crime in the City of Chicago. Second, another evaluation of the Beat Rep program found that there was a greater decrease in crime during 1978 in unfunded police districts. Third, findings from the evaluation also showed there were no significant differences between the funded and unfunded districts in the majority of the program outcome measures. There was less public willingness to help address local crime problems in the funded districts. Fourth, most Chicagoans were not aware of the Beat Rep program. Strange as it was, the Beat Rep program headquarters and district centers had telephone numbers which were not even available in the white pages of the Chicago telephone directory.

Consequently, Citizens Alert pushed for reforms in the Beat Rep program including: further revision of a funding proposal for the year 1979; using a private agency to select and recommend a civilian director for the program; and turning the Beat Rep program over to a reputable social agency for administration. By 1980, this community policing program was terminated after its funding became the sole responsibility of the City of Chicago.

## ADDRESSING THE USE OF DEADLY FORCE BY POLICE

Between 1976 and 1982, Citizens Alert persistently pleaded with the CPD to revise and improve department regulations governing the use of deadly force. The group campaigned for the reduction of excessive and deadly force through both training and administrative regulations. One of the organization's interventions was to push for training about the use of deadly force for both new police recruits and in-service officers. As a result, in 1977, the police department established a mandatory Use of Deadly Force Review Seminar, which almost all sworn officers attended at the Police Academy in groups of 40 to 60.<sup>42</sup> It was reported that instructors at the CPD's Timothy J. O'Connor Training Center told their classes of police officers in that seminar that they were taking that mandatory training because Citizens Alert and the AER persuaded the Police Board to require it.<sup>43</sup>

On January 12, 1978, Citizens Alert mobilized more than 75 supporters to attend the monthly meeting of the Police Board and called for a regulation limiting the time when off-duty police officers could carry their guns.<sup>44</sup> At this meeting Ruth Wells, then executive director of Citizens Alert, presented some research findings pointing out that many police departments in the country had rules advising officers to leave their guns at home if they planned to drink. At that time, the CPD had no such rule; it had only a regulation against police officers being intoxicated both on and off-duty. Citizens Alert's sustained pressure on the Police Board contributed to the CPD's General Order 80-20 of 1980 instructing officers to refrain from carrying firearms during non-duty hours when they might be consuming alcoholic beverages or using legally prescribed drugs. This order could explain

the absence of police shootings during the 1980 Christmas holidays. It was actually the first time in the history of the Chicago police that there was no police shooting during the Christmas season.

Citizens Alert's advocacy for regulations about the use of deadly force was further gratified when a "Protection of Life" policy was approved at the CPB meeting of October 1985. This reform forbade the use of deadly force even in the case of a fleeing felon unless the officer had reason to believe that a life was in danger. During the same year, Citizens Alert launched a ten-month undertaking called the "Investigations Project." The project consisted in having trained freelance investigators contact victims of police brutality, interview witnesses, record documents for court cases, and consult with lawyers to review the cases about which these investigators had collected data through on-scene investigations. The project resulted in the probe of 32 police-related fatalities previously ruled as justified by the CPD, and most important, it led to four lawsuits against the City of Chicago and the CPD.

In 2005, Citizens Alert asked Police Superintendent Phil Cline to supplement technical training in Taser use with crisis intervention training (CIT). In a featured letter in the Chicago Sun-Times issue of February 17, 2005 Mary Powers, coordinator of Citizens Alert, stated: "Before an officer is issued a Taser, there should be training in resolving tense situations—particularly those involving emotionally or mentally impaired persons who seem to pose a danger to themselves or others."<sup>45</sup>

Consequently, in the same year, Citizens Alert's representatives participated in a weeklong CIT session at the Chicago Police Academy and urged that the course be required for all officers to whom Taser guns are assigned. Three years later, in 2008, Citizens Alert tried to prevent the CPD's plan of equipping police officers with assault rifles. First, the group's representatives met with Superintendent Jody Weis

to express their opposition to that project. Then, they testified in CPB meetings to convey their concern about the dangers of using such powerful assault arms on streets. Finally, the group organized a public campaign against the project. Despite all these efforts by community groups, the Police Board approved that project.

## ADDRESSING HIGH-SPEED POLICE CHASES

After helplessly witnessing injuries and deaths of car thieves or innocent pedestrians caused by high-speed chases ending in accidents, between 1983 and 2003, Citizens Alert repeatedly raised with the CPD's leadership issues of safety and liability related to police hot pursuits.<sup>46</sup> In 1984, the organization called for a moratorium and a review on high-speed chases. It urged Police Superintendent Fred Rice to order that statistics be collected about the number of arrests and convictions of persons pursued in high-speed chases, injuries, fatalities, and the extent of property damage involved. Consequently, in 1985, the CPD launched a review of its hot pursuit policy. This review resulted in important restrictions including a requirement for supervisory consent and radio monitoring throughout every pursuit.

Citizens Alert reiterated its call for a reevaluation of the CPD's hot pursuit policy at the Police Board meeting of March 1, 1990, just after the death of a civilian due to a high-speed chase by police. The group's unrelenting pressure led, in 1991, to the CPD's opening "a defensive driving" training facility, with the requirement for every police recruit to complete a five-day course before graduation from the Police Academy, and officers already in service to be given a

two-day in-service training. In 1993, Commander Joseph L. Curtin of Area 5 police district invited Citizens Alert's representatives to a public meeting during which he credited the organization for the establishment of the new police "Driver's Ed" facility adjoining his district station and for the adoption by the CPD of a more progressive training approach to address issues of hot pursuit.<sup>47</sup>

In 2002, following a report that there were 625 hot pursuits in Chicago and that nearly 30 percent of those ended in a crash, Police Superintendent Terry Hillard ordered a comprehensive review of the CPD's policies and procedures regarding vehicle pursuit. However, it took another tragic end to a police hot pursuit in 2003 to prompt the adoption of new regulations regarding high speed chase. On January 2, 2003 Qing Chang, a 25-year-old pregnant woman, was killed in a police pursuit of a car involved in a robbery. In testimony before the CPB in the wake of this incident, Citizens Alert's representatives stated that police and public safety required reevaluation and new limitations of police pursuits in the City of Chicago. As a result, on April 24, 2003, CPD adopted a new vehicle pursuit policy.

## THE NEUTRAL OBSERVER PROGRAM

Citizens Alert has traditionally avoided taking an active part in protests and marches whenever possible. Instead, the organization established a pioneering Neutral Observer program to monitor the behavior of both police and demonstrators during public protests and marches. It established the program in 1976 in response to the increasing number of violent, racially motivated demonstrations and incidents in Chicago at that time. In the Neutral Observer program, volunteers were recruited and trained to be present at demonstrations at the request of protest organizers. Wearing armbands with the words “Citizens Alert Observer” to identify them, volunteers observed the behavior of police, demonstrators and counter-demonstrators, and reported unusual incidents during demonstrations. Their responsibility was to provide an impartial account of the interactions of all persons involved in any disturbance or unusual incidents during demonstrations. “We play the role of neutral observers by having information available for either side,” Powers said. “This cuts instances of provocative behavior. Organizers ask us to observe, and they see it as protection.” Citizens Alert informed the police of demonstrators’ requests to observe their marches and consequently submitted a report about the events to the police superintendent. Volunteers in the program not only were available to any groups requesting their presence at demonstrations and occasions of racial tensions, but they would also testify at court hearings on police brutality.

Citizens Alert was frequently asked to provide neutral observers at demonstrations or on other occasions to assure objective reporting of potential arrest situations. The presence of neutral observers during protests contributed to



Source: Citizens Alert's archives

Citizens Alert's Neutral Observers Dorothy Tollifson, Betty Lewis, and Charles Washington (in the background), 1982.

some change in police behavior in events where the likelihood of violence was high.

In 1976, Citizens Alert neutral observers averted intensified racial conflict in Marquette Park in Chicago by diverting African American motorists from driving into a dangerous zone where enraged white mobs threatened violence against an African American group that had planned a march. When schools opened in fall 1978 and there were threats of violence over the bussing issue in the area of the William J. Bogan High School in Chicago, the police department specifically called Citizens Alert to confirm the police had every-

thing under control, and that the organization's volunteers did not need to be present as observers.

In 1980, during demonstrations by Iranian students following the Iran hostage crisis, Chicago was one of the few major cities in the country where property damage and violence between demonstrators and police were avoided partly due to the presence of Citizens Alert neutral observers. In 1983, the presence of neutral observers during a police harassment of the Puerto Rican Independista movement in Humboldt Park helped diminish violence and eventually resulted in the reluctant acceptance by police of the community's

right to assemble, march and demonstrate. During 1986, Citizens Alert dispatched neutral observers for demonstrations in Chicago against the U.S. intervention in Central America. "I've been to so many marches it's hard to remember. . . . The gay-rights parades, the Puerto Rican parade, the demonstrations against the Shah of Iran. And we'd see the cops up there on the roof along the parade route with their guns, almost expecting trouble," said Dorothy Tollifson, one of the most famous volunteers in the Neutral Observer program. "Of course, we'd never go unless the sponsors asked us to. And generally it seemed everyone behaved a little better when we were there."<sup>48</sup>

## ASSISTING VICTIMS OF POLICE BRUTALITY AND ABUSE



Source: Citizens Alert's archives

A protest in Chicago over the George Risper police brutality case at Daley Plaza – 1994. At left is Citizen Alert Coordinator Mary Powers.

Before the 1970s, victims of police brutality and abuse in Chicago had difficulty accessing legal aid resources and appropriate assistance services. After the hiring of its first executive director in 1974, Citizens Alert started providing support and guidance to victims of police misconduct. The target groups for assistance services included people of color, people with disabilities, youth, and LGBTQ (i.e., lesbian, gay,

bisexual, transgender and queer). Services the organization provided include: making referrals; accompanying families of people killed by police or who died in custody to the Medical Examiner's Office; facilitating meetings between community representatives and police officials; mediating community-police conflict resolutions; organizing outreach workshops in neighborhoods for guidance about how to effectively respond to police misconduct; and helping victims of police abuse file complaints with the CPD's investigatory office.

When complainants were charged with an offense and ordered to appear in court, Citizens Alert recommended civil rights law firms or pro bono lawyers who specialized in civil rights litigation. The usual protocol was to give three referrals to persons needing legal counsel. In most cases, Citizens Alert's volunteers would suggest that callers contact the People's Law Office, the Law Office of Stan E. Willis Ltd., or Loevy & Loevy. Sometimes, they referred people to other civil rights law firms as well. When the organization received a number of calls of the same nature from the same police district, it often put together a committee to visit the police district commander for an investigation of the problem and the search for appropriate solutions. Two individual cases described below illustrate well how Citizens Alert provided assistance to victims of police brutality and abuse.

### The Appleton Family Case

In 1976, Mr. and Mrs. Theatry Appleton, an African American couple, moved to East Beverly, a predominantly white neighborhood on the South Side of Chicago in the 22nd police district. Soon after moving in, the Appletons were subjected to intense harassment and vandalism by some neighborhood white youths. They were unable to obtain protection from their police district station.

Citizens Alert's members saw an article about the Appletons' situation in the Chicago Sun-Times and contacted the couple. The latter informed the organization that they were not the only black family in the area being subjected to harassment. Consequently, Citizens Alert's representatives

called a meeting with the concerned families at the Appletons' home, and suggested a high-level meeting with police officials. Thus, Citizens Alert's executive director Ruth Wells contacted Superintendent James Rochford, who in turn had a call placed to the local district commander and his deputy chief, with orders to contact Citizens Alert and set up a meeting to discuss the problem in his district.

The meeting took place at a local church in the 22nd police district. Apart from District Commander M. J. Higgins, his Deputy Chief, and two Citizens Alert representatives, 11 families were represented at the meeting. The discussion was not fruitful because the behavior of the police district leaders was somewhat hostile and arrogant. Consequently, Citizens Alert pressed for a meeting with Superintendent Rochford. After several weeks of persistent requests to the superintendent, the meeting took place at the CPD headquarters. Eight black families living in Beverly, a Citizens Alert's representative, a leader of the Beverly Area Planning Association, Superintendent Rochford, and Deputy Superintendents Michael Spiotto and Sam Nolan, were in attendance. For two hours, the group discussed the lack of police services for black residents in the neighborhood and its negative impact on their safety. Following this meeting, several arrests were made and police patrols increased in the neighborhood.<sup>49</sup>

### **The George Risper Police Brutality Case**

On March 31, 1994, George Risper, the only African American middle school student at Seward Academy located in a white neighborhood, was seriously ill-treated by Michael J. Monaco, a Chicago police officer nicknamed "Bulldog," in front of his teammates and school leaders.<sup>50</sup> "Bulldog" pushed Risper 10 to 20 feet along the sidewalk, grabbed

him by his school jacket, slammed him against a concrete sewer cover, kicked him repeatedly, and told him he was not part of the neighborhood because of his race. A second officer at the scene refused to intervene. Worse, later on that day, the Chicago police officers on duty at the 9<sup>th</sup> Chicago police district station prevented Risper's parents and other civilians from filing a complaint about the rogue police officer's misconduct.

It was only after Citizens Alert's intervention that the case got the needed attention from officials of the criminal justice system and the police leadership. The organization coordinated the 17-month fight for justice for Risper in three major ways. First, its representatives testified at meetings of the CPB on the case. Second, they made several unsuccessful attempts to convince Cook County State's Attorney Jack O'Malley to charge the two police offenders with a hate crime or at least, racial intimidation. Third, the organization sought and got a federal intervention citing the violation of Risper's civil rights.

Consequently, the federal Department of Justice authorized a lengthy investigation. In late August 1995, the U.S. Attorney took a resolution imposing several penalties on "Bulldog." These included being under supervision of the federal government for two years, agreeing to a 60-day suspension without pay, making restitution of one twelfth of his 1994 earnings to the City of Chicago, reporting to the Federal Pre-Trial Services taking sensitivity training approved by the Federal Probation Office at his own expense, and avoiding any violation of the law within the following two years. The ensuing court case, *Risper vs. City of Chicago (1995)*, was settled shortly after the resolution of the U.S. Department of Justice.

## HONORING POLICE OFFICERS AND CIVILIANS



Photo: Citizens Alert archives

Gladys Lewis presents William Schober and John Hickey with the Citation of Honor Awards, 1985.

Citizens Alert did not limit its activities to pointing out bad cops and complaining about police wrongdoings, or calling for police reforms. The police watchdog organization recognized both police officers and civilians for their outstanding and praiseworthy contributions to the defense of human rights through many awards including the Citation of Honor Award and the Reverend Willie Baker Award. The latter award was established in 1984 to commemorate Reverend Willie Baker's exceptional drive for racial harmony, social justice, and particularly resolution of issues involving police and fellow residents of public housing. He served as President of the Citizens Alert board and as chaplain at Cabrini and Cook County hospitals.

Citizens Alert acknowledged more than 10 police officers who courageously defended civilian life and confronted misconduct on the police force. On March 27, 1985, Citizens Alert commended three police officers with the Citation of Honor Awards for outstanding performance and integrity. Officers John Hickey and William Schober received the awards for their courage in resolving a dangerous situation without resorting to the use of deadly force. Citizens Alert honored Detective Frank Laverty for his testimony in the "Street Files" case, which paved the way for greater accessibility by defense attorneys to police records on crime investigations. In a press release, Police Superintendent Rice praised the unusual recognition of police officers by a civilian group for their use of restraint, stating,

To the best of my knowledge, this is the first time a citizens' group will formally recognize police officers for exercising restraint and good judgment...I am elated that Citizens Alert has decided to recognize their achievements.



Mary Powers with Police Superintendent Fred Rice and John A. McDermott at the Reverend Willie Baker Award ceremony in honor of McDermott, 1985.

Other police officers Citizens Alert honored included Howard Saffold, Lt. Arthur T. Lindsay, Patricia Hill, and five Highland Park police officers. Saffold has dedicated his life to correcting wrongs in the criminal justice system.<sup>51</sup> As a police officer, he faced discrimination and witnessed police brutality. He retired from the CPD in 1991. Arthur T. Lindsay, a retired Chicago police lieutenant, received the Rev. Willie Baker Award posthumously in recognition of his outstanding commitment to racial and social justice. Citizens Alert honored Patricia Hill in 1993 for her courageous leadership of the African American Police League. The League advocates for black police officers, particularly when it comes to disciplinary hearings and legal issues.<sup>52</sup> Citizens Alert honored five Highland Park police officers—Lisa Northam, Rodney Watt, James E. Coursey, Jr., James Nolan and John Dabrowski—for their “exceptional professional integrity”. The honored officers were terminated from their jobs after courageously “blowing the whistle” on racial profiling in their North Shore police department.

Likewise, Citizens Alert’s honored more than 20 civilians for their outstanding contributions to social justice and criminal

justice. John A. McDermott, founder, editor, and publisher of the Chicago Reporter, was the first recipient of the Reverend Willie Baker Award. He was recognized for his exceptional community service in urban affairs at Citizens Alert’s 18th Anniversary on March 27, 1985. Other civilians Citizens alert honored with the Reverend Willie Baker Award include:

- Jean Hardisty, Chip Berlet, and Peggy Shimmer of the Midwest Research Institute;
- Citizens Alert volunteers Dorothy Tollifson and Elax Taylor;
- Pearl Hirshfield, an artist;
- Jeffrey Haas and Flint Taylor, civil rights lawyers at People’s Law Office;
- Greg O’Reilly of the Cook County Public Defender’s Office;
- Locke E. Bowman, the legal director of the Roderick MacArthur Justice Center;
- Nancy Jefferson, president of the Midwest Community Council;
- Pam Zekman, a CBS Chicago Channel 2 investigative reporter; and
- Peter Karl, a former investigative reporter from TV Channel 5 in Chicago.

## BUILDING COALITIONS FOR POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY



Source: Citizens Alert's archives

A view of some of the speakers at the 2004 N-COPA conference in Portland, Oregon. Mary Powers, far left.

As a small, poorly funded organization, Citizens Alert could not achieve its projects without partnerships and alliances. Conferences, interagency collaboration and coalition building were central to the success of many campaigns the organization spearheaded. From 1972 to 2008, the police watchdog group organized or cosponsored more than 15 conferences not only in Chicago, but also in many cities across the U.S. Citizens Alert collaborated with a number of organizations including progressive police groups, community organizations and church groups. African-American police associations were among the traditional allies of Citizens Alert in the fight against police misconduct. For instance, Citizens Alert cooperated with the African American Patrolman's League on police-community affairs for decades. "They've taken a beat. They face the same enemies we do.

And the police unions don't represent them,"<sup>53</sup> said Powers, reflecting on the impressive representation of African-American police groups in conferences Citizens Alert organized through the years. In the 1980s, Citizens Alert found itself in various roles with many community groups, associations, and coalitions, providing information, speakers, and liaison regarding police brutality. Between 2006 and 2010, it had interagency collaboration with 28 local organizations and associations. Many church groups sought Citizens Alert's participation in developing positions on police accountability.

Beyond interagency collaboration, Citizens Alert achieved most of its goals through coalition building. A review of Citizens Alert's use of the coalition building strategy shows that the organization often followed a four-stage process:

1. First it took advantage of a major police brutality incident or scandal to call for a solution to a related police problem that is traditionally overlooked.
2. Then, it convened a core group of stakeholders and consultants to examine the police problem identified and develop a proposal to address it.
3. Next, it organized a conference to raise the awareness of partner organizations about the urgency to address the problem.
4. Finally, it capitalized on the gathering of organizations to launch a coalition or merge a previous coalition into a new, stronger one, for its policy project.

The creation of the National Coalition on Police Accountability (N-COPA), Citizens Alert's only coalition project at the national level, illustrates how the organization built its alliances.

On March 3, 1991, a bystander, George Holliday, videotaped from a distance a horrible scene in which Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) officers repeatedly striking Rodney King, an African American man in Los Angeles with their batons while other officers stood by watching without taking any action to stop the beating.

“The Rodney King incident really woke people up. It was a landmark as far as public awareness about police brutality is concerned,”<sup>54</sup> Mary Powers said. The shock and public outrage stemming from the Rodney King incident led Citizens Alert and the National Interreligious Task Force on Criminal Justice to convene an emergency consultation in Chicago in May 1991. This consultation led to the organization of the first national conference on police accountability in fall 1991,

bringing to Chicago over 90 persons from 15 states and two foreign countries for an intensive two-day workshop with experts in civilian oversight of police, civil rights law, community activists, representatives of law enforcement, and delegates from faith-based organizations.

The conference resulted in the establishment of the N-COPA. This coalition played a pioneering and pivotal role in the development of police accountability programs in many cities around the U.S. and convened nine conferences across the country. Mary Powers was the convener of N-COPA meetings. The N-COPA's bi-monthly journal, *Policing by Consent*, was published between September 1996 and August 1999, and had readership in 101 cities.

## CITIZENS ALERT AND THE OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Years of resentment from a public skeptical about police investigating themselves culminated in pressure on the CPB to establish an independent office to review civilian complaints against police. Complaints about police misconduct were previously reviewed by the CPD's Internal Affairs Division (IAD). The IAD was established as a response to the public uproar in the wake of the 1960 Summerdale police scandal. In this scandal, eight police officers assigned to the North Side Summerdale District (currently known as the Foster District) were caught breaking into stores along their patrol routes. The creation of IAD was the first major dramatic policy change inside the CPD toward investigating misconduct within the police force.<sup>55</sup>

In 1973, Citizens Alert developed a four-way advocacy that significantly bore on the establishment of a civilian investigation office in the CPD. First, in April 1973, the organization prevailed upon the Police Board to appoint a committee to study the idea of a civilian presence in the police department to review complaints of police misconduct. Consequently, at a July 1973 board meeting, Superintendent James B. Conlisk announced that a study of the IAD was being conducted, which might result in the recruitment of civilian personnel in the police department. Second, Citizens Alert testified at the City Council hearings on the same demand. Third, the organization's members assisted U.S. Representative Ralph Harold Metcalfe in preparing his own hearings on excessive force by Chicago police. Finally, Citizens Alert members met with representatives of the Chicago Bar Association's special committee convened to study the IAD's complaint review procedures.

Subsequently, together, Congressman Metcalfe, the Chicago Bar Association, and community organizations led by Citizens Alert threatened the CPD with a lawsuit in response to the IAD's patterns of inadequate, closed-door investigations of excessive force by officers. All these efforts resulted in the establishment of the Office of Professional Standards (OPS) in May 1974. The OPS consisted of 30 full-time civilian staff responsible for investigating police unethical behavior, particularly brutality in the interrogation process. "I honestly believe that Citizens Alert made that possible. And I'm not saying that out of any sense of pride. We alerted the public and kept the pressure on,"<sup>56</sup> stated Ruth Wells, executive director of Citizens Alert, talking about her organization's role in the establishment of the OPS.

Following the establishment of the OPS, Citizens Alert pressed the CPB for the relocation of the Office outside the intimidating environment of the CPD headquarters. Consequently, in 1985, the OPS was moved to a more neutral location. In addition, two OPS satellite offices were opened on the West Side and South Side of Chicago to facilitate filing of complaints. A Citizens Alert representative was invited to share the speaking platform at the open house marking the relocation of the Office with Mayor Harold Washington and Police Superintendent Fred Rice. In their speech, both leaders acknowledged Citizens Alert's pivotal input in the decentralization of the OPS.

However, over the years, the OPS was decried for its ineffectiveness. The Office seemingly became highly politicized during Mayor Jane Byrne's administration. Aurie Pen-

nick, then Citizens Alert's executive director, stated that "The OPS dissuades people from complaining and, in some cases, doesn't accept complaints, doesn't investigate complaints, and doesn't find in favor of the complainants." On July 26, 2006, in a featured letter to the Chicago Sun-Times,

Powers, Citizens Alert Coordinator, and Gerald Frazier, then president of the organization's board, called for the establishment of an independent civilian review body to replace the OPS.

## CITIZENS ALERT AND THE INDEPENDENT POLICE REVIEW AUTHORITY

A chain of police brutality scandals in late 2006 and early 2007 provided Citizens Alert a window of opportunity for the launch of a campaign that would result in the establishment of an independent, civilian review system in Chicago.

First, in October 2006, following a summer of criticism and pressure on the OPS, Mayor Richard M. Daley announced the abrupt resignation of Tisa Morris, the chief administrator of the Office, and appointed a five-member panel to conduct a nationwide search for a new administrator. Then, in February 2007, two well-publicized police brutality incidents put the CPD in the spotlight again. In the videotape shown around the country, Anthony Abbate, a 12-year police veteran, could be seen beating a female bartender less than half his size. A second videotape showed the beating of four businessmen by three Chicago police officers. In the aftermath of the firestorm of controversy and national media attention ignited by these two police scandals, Superintendent Phil Cline resigned on April 2, 2007. In the same year the release of the report by University of Chicago School of Law professor Craig Futterman about the dismally low number of cases sustained by the OPS made matters worse for the CPD. Citizens Alert decided to take advantage of this cascade of scandals and reports on the CPD to push for the establishment of an overdue independent civilian oversight body to monitor police misconduct in Chicago.

On February 7, 2007, Citizens Alert convened a daylong conference entitled “Symposium on Civilian Oversight of Chicago Police” at the Jane Addams Center for Social Pol-



Photo by Byron Samuel.

Flint Taylor of People’s Law Office presenting at the 2007 symposium on police accountability at the Jane Addams College of Social Work.

icy and Research at the University of Illinois at Chicago. The meeting brought together a broad cross-section of 60 stakeholders including lawyers, researchers, police leaders, students, and leaders of religious and community organizations. The participants spent several hours identifying police problems in Chicago, analyzing statistics, and assessing the effectiveness of various civilian oversight models in use in other major U.S. cities. The symposium resulted in the creation of the Chicago Coalition for Police Accountability (CCPA). Numerous follow-up meetings of CCPA’s committees took place in March 2007 to draft an ordinance proposal for an independent civilian review system.

On April 17, 2007, in a news conference, the CCPA, with representatives from Citizens Alert, the Cook County Public Defender’s Office, Northwestern University’s MacArthur Justice Center, and the University of Chicago’s Mandel Legal

Aid Clinic, demanded the establishment of an independent civilian review agency to replace the OPS, and presented its proposal. They argued that the famous videotaped off-duty police officer Anthony Abbate's beating of a petite bartender was a typical illustration of patterns of police brutality that had been occurring in Chicago for decades.<sup>58</sup> Concomitantly with this coalition's first press conference, a letter was sent to all 50 Chicago aldermen and the Mayor's Office. In the letter, the CCPA pointed out several urgent reasons to seek a civilian review agency that would be independent of the CPD. With a special election threatening the seats of over half of all incumbent aldermen a few weeks after, the coalition delegated its members to have meetings with the aldermen to elicit more support for its ordinance proposal.

Unexpectedly, in early May 2007, Mayor Daley held a press conference stating that he was introducing his own ordinance to take the OPS from under the authority of the CPD. In response, the following day, some coalition members including Locke Bowman of the Roderick MacArthur Justice Center, Flint Taylor of People's Law Office, and Gerald Frazier of Citizens Alert, called a press conference. They called on all the 50 Chicago aldermen to reject Daley's OPS ordinance proposal and push for a truly independent body to monitor the police, arguing that Mayor Daley's proposal represented minor changes that would do nothing to deter gross police misconduct in Chicago and would continue to support "business as usual" at the OPS.<sup>59</sup>

The coalition sought the support of the 50 aldermen for the inclusion of key amendments in the Mayor's ordinance proposal to be adopted at the next City Council meeting. The proposed amendments included: asserting the supremacy of the ordinance over police union's contracts; ensuring that the oversight agency rather than the police superintendent have control over police abuse reviews; and finally, allowing both public participation in the selection of the new civilian review agency's administrator, and transparency in the



Photo by Byron Samuel

Mary Powers doing a presentation on the topic, "Current system of oversight of Chicago Police Department," at the 2007 symposium on police accountability.

agency's record keeping.<sup>60</sup> At the City Council meeting, a number of aldermen agreed to the coalition's view that the Mayor's ordinance needed to be strengthened. Thus, some aldermen voted to have it deferred, which gave the coalition one month to make a stronger case for the amendment of the ordinance.

By the next meeting of the City Council, in July 2007, the CCPA succeeded in getting part of its proposal included as amendments in the Mayor's ordinance proposal. The coalition did not achieve all of its objectives with the amended ordinance, but it significantly contributed to having a completely independent civilian review agency in the City of Chicago. The City Council voted to approve the ordinance on July 19, 2007, creating the Independent Police Review Authority (IPRA), a new agency to address and investigate civilian complaints against police officers. The new civilian agency is clearly different from the OPS it replaced. The OPS was a civilian review office under the authority of the CPD, whereas the IPRA is a civilian review agency under the authority of the City Council and the mayor.

## CITIZENS ALERT AND THE JON BURGE POLICE TORTURE SCANDAL PROSECUTION



Photo by Tony Kelly

Madison Hobley, police torture victim, speaking at the Shadow Report press conference, April 24, 2007. Behind Hobley, from the right: Mary Powers, Coordinator of Citizens Alert; Flint Taylor of the People's Law Office; Andrea Lyon, Associate Dean, Clinical Studies, DePaul University College of Law; Locke Bowman, Legal Director, McArthur Justice Center; and Kurt Feuer, attorney for Hobley.

The headlines of major newspapers in Chicago and around the U.S. on January 21, 2011 described the sentencing of former police commander Jon Burge, the ringleader of the three-decade police torture practice in Chicago. This sentencing was the outcome of a long politico-judicial scandal that started on February 9, 1982, when two white Chicago police officers, William Fahey and Richard O'Brien, were shot and killed on the South Side of the city. Burge, then in charge of 60 Area 2 police district violent crimes detectives, launched what was viewed by many people as the largest

manhunt in the history of Chicago.<sup>61</sup> They ransacked houses and beat people, searching for suspects, on the South Side. Potential suspects were taken to Area 2 police district headquarters where they were systematically tortured by Burge and detectives under his command, and later released or falsely accused.

On February 14, 1982, Andrew Wilson and his brother Jackie were arrested and brought to Area 2 police district headquarters. Burge tortured Andrew Wilson during an interrogation that lasted seventeen hours. Later, Wilson alleged that he was beaten, burned with cigarettes, and stretched over a hot radiator which burned his back. Burge brought in an electric shock box, similar to those used by the U.S. Army in Vietnam, and attached wires that ran from a generator in the box to Wilson's ears and genitals. Then he repeatedly electro-shocked Wilson by turning the generator crank.<sup>62</sup> Wilson eventually confessed to the killings of the two officers.

Burge and detectives under his command used various torture tools including three electrical devices: a cattle prod,<sup>63</sup> a hand-cranked device, and a violet wand.<sup>64</sup> Chicago police torturers also used stun guns, cigarette burnings, and hair dryers on their torture victims. Moreover, they engaged in mock executions and suffocated suspects by putting plastic bags over their victims' heads. In 1986 Wilson—who, meanwhile, had been prosecuted and sentenced to two life terms—filed a civil rights lawsuit against Burge in Federal District Court. The litigation was brought by Flint Taylor of the People's Law Office. The litigation of the Wilson tor-

ture case became the vehicle for uncovering the blatant evidence of a systematic practice of torture on African American suspects in the CPD's Area 2 and Area 3 police district stations for years.

Citizens Alert became aware of the police torture scandal late in 1982 when Dale Coventry of the Office of the Cook County Public Defender visited the organization's office seeking records of cattle prods being used to obtain confessions from detainees in police custody. This visit not only tipped off the police watchdog group, but it also marked the start of a long fight the group spearheaded for justice for police torture victims. Citizens Alert developed a long, multilevel campaign to keep the scandal in the spotlight and maintain pressure on police leaders and lawmakers for a full investigation and prosecution of the torture case. As Flint Taylor remarked:

Citizens Alert was instrumental in taking that information out to the public. They were putting pressure on the police board, and organizing hearings at the city council asking why Burge was still in the police, they brought in Amnesty International. They also met with the police superintendent LeRoy Martin over and over again demanding investigation.<sup>65</sup>

In 1989, Citizens Alert initiated the Coalition to End Police Torture and Brutality, an alliance of 35 community organizations and churches, to call for the investigation of the police torture scandal and the dismissal of Burge and other torturers from the CPD. The coalition repeatedly attended meetings of the Police Board to demand that Burge be suspended for his history of torture and brutality pending the investigation. For instance, on September 14, 1989, Powers and other members of the coalition testified before the CPB, and in Superintendent Martin's presence, raised for the third time the torture issue and their demand that Burge be fired. Superin-

tendent Martin, seemingly outraged at Powers's persistence to have Burge dismissed from the police, responded by stating: "Commander Burge is working, as far as I know, he'll be working, Ms. Powers. I have no reason to suspend Commander Burge. You want him suspended. I have no reason to suspend him at this time."<sup>66</sup> Then, at the November 30, 1989, meeting of the Police Board, for the fourth time in a row, the coalition reiterated its call for the suspension of Burge. In addition, it demanded that Burge and his lawyers should not receive another cent of taxpayers' money and that a criminal investigation should be initiated.

Thanks to the coalition's aggressive pressure on the Police Board and the superintendent, on February 10, 1993, Jon Burge was fired from the Chicago police. According to Powers, the dismissal of Burge from the CPD was a major victory for all those who were involved in the struggle for police accountability in Chicago, especially members of the Coalition to End Police Torture and Brutality. "We are very pleased about Burge and commend the Police Board for such an unprecedented decision,"<sup>67</sup> she said. The president of the CPB, Albert Maule, declined to comment on the Burge case but acknowledged that "for better or for worse, Citizens Alert kept this issue alive for several years,"<sup>68</sup> culminating in the firing of Burge and the suspension of two of his colleagues. Most observers concurred that if it was not for Citizens Alert's persistence, Superintendent Martin would never have reopened the police torture case and sent it to the Police Board.

Next, the coalition organized a policy campaign to overturn SB 1789 bill, approved by the Illinois General Assembly with only six dissenting votes. The bill, which would establish a three-year statute of limitations on crime charges brought against police officers before the Chicago Police Board, had already reached Governor Jim Edgar's desk and was awaiting his signature before it was spotted by a coalition

member. The coalition urged community leaders and partners to call and write letters to the Governor to express their opposition to the bill. Then it arranged a meeting with the Governor's legal advisor. As a result, in a correspondence of November 17, 1992, to Powers, convener of the coalition, James W. Graham, Special Assistant to Governor Edgar, stated that the Governor signed an amendatory veto of the SB 1789 bill to change it in three ways. First, the bill would affect only police incidents that occurred after the bill became law. Second, the governor changed the statute of limitations to five years, instead of three. Finally, the bill established a new requirement of public disclosure by police departments.

Governor Edgar signed the amended statute of limitations bill into law in late 1992. The legislation set forth that a charge of unreasonable force against police officer must be brought before the police board "within 5 years after the commission of the act upon which the charge is based. The statute of limitations established in this section shall apply only to acts of unreasonable force occurring on or after the effective date of this Amendatory Act of 1992" (65 ILCS 5/10-1-18.1). "We have some disappointments, but we feel this is a victory for the people," conceded Powers. It was not an actual win for the coalition. In fact, the legislation did not significantly derail the initial scheme of the bill's sponsors. It could have no effect on charges against Burge and his detectives involved in the torture scandal between 1972 and 1991 because it exempted from its provisions any alleged police brutality that took place prior to its enactment.

On August 2, 1999, Citizens Alert convened a group of over 40 high-profile political and community leaders to demand that the CPD leadership reopen and review several investigations into police torture. In an open letter to CPD Superintendent Terry Hillard, the President of the CPB Demetrius Carney, and the OPS Director Callie Baird, the group of leaders urged these officials to commission an independent

investigation into the obvious violations of regulations and procedures of legal process by certain OPS investigators and police officers during the torture investigations.

Noticing that political and police leaders were highly reluctant to take actions about the torture scandal, and that the media, the general public, and even torture victims' attorneys were losing interest in the cause, Citizens Alert decided to use legal advocacy at the federal level in order to strengthen its anti-torture campaign. Thus, on April 5, 2001, Mary Powers and Mary L. Johnson, both board members of Citizens Alert, and Lawrence E. Kennon, former president of the Cook County Bar Association and a long-time supporter of Citizens Alert, with the support of 15 organizations and associations, filed a petition before the Cook County Criminal Court Chief Judge Paul Biebel. In the petition, they asked for the appointment of a special prosecutor to investigate allegations that a group of Chicago police detectives committed acts of torture against some 66 African American suspects at Area 2 and Area 3 police headquarters from 1972 to 1991.<sup>69</sup> Concomitantly, Citizens Alert organized a collection of over a thousand signatures in support of the petition. As a result, on November 5, 2001, Judge Biebel appointed Edward J. Egan and Robert D. Boyle as special prosecutors to investigate police torture.

When the long-awaited report of the special prosecutors Edward Egan and Robert Boyle investigating the Chicago police torture scandal was released in July 2006, there was a widespread outrage at the lack of indictment or recommendations for punishment for various reasons. The report failed to hold high-level officials accountable. It did not provide even a symbolic remedy or damages for the men who were abused. Worse, the four-year investigation contended that no charges against Burge and his men could be filed because the statute of limitations had long run out.

Consequently, Citizens Alert supported the release of the “Report on the Failure of Special Prosecutors Edward J. Egan and Robert D. Boyle to Fairly Investigate Systemic Police Torture in Chicago,”<sup>70</sup> commonly designated as the Shadow Report. This report, prepared by attorneys and advocates from the Chicago Committee on Police Torture based in the People’s Law Office, highlighted major unaddressed issues in the report of the report of the special prosecutors Egan and Boyle. More than 200 Chicago lawyers, researchers, educators, religious and organizations’ leaders signed it. In April 2007, Citizens Alert cosponsored a program with the Illinois Academy of Criminology at the Northwestern University Law School to allow speakers from the People’s Law Office and the MacArthur Justice Center to present a summary of the Shadow Report to the public.

Beyond its advocacy at the local and federal level levels, Citizens Alert was one of the first organizations to use an international leverage in the Chicago police torture case. In a letter and a press release of October 2, 1991, the organization called on Amnesty International to weigh in the fight for justice for the Chicago police torture victims. As a result, the London-based international human rights organization sent a letter of inquiry to the Illinois Attorney General urging an investigation by the office of allegations of torture charges against the CPD. Then, in 1998, Citizens Alert hosted Pierre Sane, Secretary General of Amnesty International, who wanted to meet with victims of police torture before launching the Amnesty International’s 1999 report on human rights violations in the U.S.A. On October 21, 2008, U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald indicted Burge for lying and impeding court proceedings during his 2003 written testimony in relation to a lawsuit filed by former death row inmate Madison Hobley. A week after, Burge was arraigned before Federal Judge Joan Lefkow. He was convicted on two counts of obstruction of justice and one count of per-

jury on June 28, 2010. Ignoring her selfless, longtime fight to witness this symbolic, but yet unprecedented conviction of a police leader in Chicago, Powers gave credit to Citizens Alert’s broad base of supporters in these terms:

Whether you may have joined in Citizens Alert’s sustained struggle for truth in this unprecedented situation, your involvement finally has paid off. . . . Whether you were able to monitor civil trials, to pressure the Chicago Police Board to fire Jon Burge, to petition the courts for appointment of a special prosecutor, . . . or to attend demonstrations to keep the issue alive in public awareness, your role was significant and your efforts important to this overall victory in the courts. Please congratulate yourselves and vow to hang in there until every remaining Burge victim is given an opportunity to establish his innocence in a new trial.<sup>71</sup>

The efforts of Citizens Alert and its partners in the coalition were further gratified when, on January 21, 2011, Judge Lefkow sentenced Burge to four and a half years in a federal prison. Overall, Citizens Alert’s contributions to the successful outcomes of the Jon Burge torture scandal cannot be stressed enough. The organization provided the leadership needed at the right time for the fight for justice on behalf of the torture victims. As Mary L. Johnson, pithily summarized:

Citizens Alert planted the seed for the successful outcomes for the police torture scandal. The issue was dormant for a while; it was not going anywhere. The attorneys have given up on it; the people in jail have given up on it. But when Citizens Alert got together for that petition, and put it up for that special prosecutor, it started to germinate again, and started blooming, then media people and attorneys took over.<sup>72</sup>

## THE LEADERSHIP

The board of directors of Citizens Alert represented individuals and groups from diverse racial, economic, and ethnic backgrounds, from within the City of Chicago as well as suburban areas. They included college professors, attorneys, police officers, retired professionals, victims and their family members, community leaders and activists. Board

members were actively involved in the organization. In addition to setting policies and deciding on strategies for direction, they also carried out work that would normally be assigned to paid staff. From 1970 to 2010, the organization had nine board presidents:



Source: Citizens Alert's archives

Citizens Alert Board members, at Citizens Alert's Eighth Annual Police Conference, Mt. Carmel Church, Chicago, November 10, 1979. From left: Howard Saffold, Mitt Cohen, Boris Brail, Dorothy Tollifson, Juanita Van Dorn (Board President), Rev. Marty Gool, Lieutenant Arthur Lindsay, Mary Powers, and Charles Washington

1. Fred Glick, attorney and founding member of Citizens Alert. He was the president of the American Jewish Congress Council of Greater Chicago. Glick was the president of Citizens Alert board of directors from 1970 to 1974.
2. Milton Cohen, director of the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs. He was Citizens Alert board president from 1974 to 1976.
3. Tom Peters, a businessman. He was Citizens Alert board president from 1976 to 1977.
4. Reverend Willie Baker, chaplain at Cabrini and Cook County hospitals. He was Citizens Alert board co-president from 1977 to 1979.
5. Mary Powers, sociologist and past president of the Winnetka Human Relations Committee. She was the board co-president from 1977 to 1979, and the coordinator of the organization for three decades.
6. Juanita Van Dorn, retired major of U.S. Air Force. She was a leader of the First Unitarian Church of Chicago. She was Citizens Alert board president from 1979 to 1984.
7. Gladys Lewis, accountant and vice-president of Supreme Life Insurance Company. She was Citizens Alert board president twice, from 1984 to 1986, and from 1989 to 2002.
8. Mary L. Johnson, community activist. She was the organization's board president from 2002 to 2004.
9. Gerald Frazier, community activist. He was the president of Citizens Alert board of directors from 2005 to 2010.

Citizens Alert has sustained its work for so long because of the dedication of a core leadership consisting of octogenarian Powers, nonagenarian Lewis, and Frazier, who is no longer actively involved in the group. The organization's capacity to develop various projects in the last three decades has been highly dependent on the devotion and experiences of these core leaders. They have often assumed alternative-

ly or cumulatively various leadership roles in the organization. "On our board, we don't have many persons, so you do what you can to have the work done," said Lewis, the group's bookkeeper for over a quarter of century.

For Flint Taylor of the People's Law Office, a long partner of Citizens Alert in the fight for police accountability, "Citizens Alert would not survive if it was not for Mary Powers or Gladys Lewis. Dedicated as Mary Powers is, and strong as dedicated as Gladys Lewis has been, there were others who probably did not put the day to day time, but these two ladies were there for the group for the same way as Citizens Alert was there for us."



Photo by Charles Hounmenou

Gerald Frazier, Mary Powers, and Gladys Lewis, all three former Presidents of the Citizens Alert Board, at the Betty Benson Award Ceremony in the honor of Powers, June 9, 2012.

## CITIZENS ALERT TODAY

This overview of Citizens Alert's history of struggle for police accountability demonstrates how community mobilizations can collaborate with police leaders and policymakers to achieve reforms in the criminal justice system. The organization has used various strategies to achieve its goals, including community mobilization, non-confrontational approach, coalition building, and policy entrepreneurship.

Citizens Alert's contributions to police reforms in Chicago should be viewed less in terms of statistics about police brutality than in terms of improvements in investigations of police misconduct cases as well police regulations, and the reduction or ending of systemic police misconduct practices. The input should also be viewed in terms of accessibility of citizens to the police decision making forums and a better representativeness of minority groups on the police force and the police board. Considering the Chicago police torture scandal and recent deaths in police lockups in the city, there is a need to protect and uphold the human rights of persons in police custody by monitoring police lockups. Such monitoring has not yet occurred in the country. Citizens Alert has the experience to start such an initiative in Chicago to help the CPD regain its lost credibility due its history of brutality and torture of detainees.

The organization is currently at a critical stage of its existence where there is an urgent need of transition of leadership coupled with the recruitment of young leaders. The Old Guard—Powers and Lewis—no longer has the energy and endurance to help sustain the organization's leading role in advocacy for police accountability. Their best wish is to pass



Photo by Charles Hourmenou

Gladys Lewis in front of Citizens Alert's office at the Jane Addams College of Social Work, UIC, 2010.

the torch to a younger generation of leaders who have the passion and dedication to carry on the organization's work for more humane and effective law enforcement. "The years take a toll on us. We are looking for younger people to carry on the work. I hope we can have some people in the close future," Lewis said. "I want the group to stay stable, but how, I do not know. I believe the organization will go higher,

but we need new impetus, new blood to implement what people saw a long time ago. Not the ideas, the ideas are already there.” Powers too has realized the urgency to recruit new members to continue the difficult work of police accountability. “When you’ve been around these problems so long, you can get immune. You can find yourself saying, ‘Oh, just another brutality case’. We need people who are genuinely shocked at police brutality,” she stated.

Citizens Alert’s relocation at the Jane Addams of College of Social Work (UIC) in 2010 and its partnership with the College’s Center of Social and Research give hope that the organization will sustain its police accountability focus and get

support needed through research and internship from the university. Beyond the transfer of Citizens Alert’s first four decades’ archives to the UIC Daley’s Library’s Special Collections, the presence of this organization in this academic setting is a great asset for students and researchers in various fields. “I thought it was more significant to have our archives in a place like UIC,”<sup>73</sup> Powers said. “Our history will be more relevant to students in social work, law school, and criminal justice.” It is expected that people who read about Citizens Alert’s history of advocacy for police accountability will draw lessons for community organizing to address police brutality and other social issues.

## Endnotes

1. Bud Schultz and Ruth Schultz, *The Price of Dissent: Testimonies of Political Repression in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 243.
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3. *Ibid.*, 94.
4. The Alliance to End Repression (AER) was a coalition of civil liberties, church, and community organizations. It was formed in early 1970 as a response to the use of excessive force by the police, and specifically the assassination of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark by the FBI-coordinated police raid in December 1969, which was viewed as the “ultimate in repression” by John Hill, the executive director of the Alliance. By 1973, the AER had 54 affiliates, ranging from the Chicago Peace Council and the Association of Black Social Workers to the Concerned Argonne Scientists. The Alliance directed its reform efforts at the Illinois prisons, the Office of the Cook County Coroner, the county bail system, and the Chicago Police Department. Citizens Alert absorbed the police task force of the AER and spearheaded its work on the Coroner’s office in 1970.
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