**VALERIE P. DENT**

First Deputy Commissioner, New York State Division of Human Rights

Valerie P. Dent was appointed by Governor Cuomo as First Deputy Commissioner for the New York State Division of Human Rights in June 2013. During her tenure at the Division, she has brought much needed attention on maximizing resources and productivity while continuing to strengthen the agency's presence around the State.

Throughout her career, Ms. Dent has sought opportunities to work within the intersection of the public/private sphere including serving as Associate Counsel of the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone where she oversaw grant and loan closings for the multi-million dollar economic development organization; as Associate Counsel at three of the largest business improvement districts (BIDs) in New York City (the Grand Central Partnership, 34th Street Partnership and Bryant Park Restoration Corporation); Vice-President of Clear Channel Adshel where she worked with municipalities on providing public amenities subsidized by outdoor advertising, and as an Associate in the Public Finance department of the law firm Mudge Rose Alexander Guthrie and Ferdon.

Ms. Dent, a graduate of Vanderbilt University and Columbia Law School, is married to David Dent, a Professor of Journalism at New York University, and is the mother of two college age children.

**Lance Freeman, Ph.D.**

Lance Freeman is a Professor in the Urban Planning Program and the Director of the doctoral program in Urban Planning at Columbia University in New York City. He is the editor of the journal City & Community. His research focuses on affordable housing, gentrification, ethnic and racial stratification in housing markets, and the relationship between the built environment and well-being. Professor Freeman teaches courses on community development, housing policy and research methods. He has also taught in the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Delaware. Prior to this, Dr. Freeman worked as a researcher at Mathematica Policy Research, a leading social policy research firm in Washington D.C. Dr. Freeman holds a Masters degree and a Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Dr. Freeman has published several articles in refereed journals on issues related to neighborhood change, urban poverty, housing policy, urban sprawl, the relationship between the built environment and public health and residential segregation. Dr. Freeman is the author of the book There Goes the Hood: Views of Gentrification from the Ground Up by Temple University Press and the forthcoming book A Haven and a Hell: The Ghetto in Black America by Columbia University Press. Dr. Freeman also obtained extensive experience working with community development groups while working as a Community Development coordinator for the North Carolina Institute of Minority Economic Development and as a Research Associate at the Center for Urban and Regional Studies in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Dr. Freeman also has professional experience working as a City Planner for the New York City Housing Authority, and as a budget analyst for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

**Matt Gonzales**

Matt Gonzales is Director of the School Diversity Project for [New York Appleseed](https://nyappleseed.org/), a non-profit social justice center in New York City focused on educational equity and school integration. He leads a citywide coalition of integration advocates called the NYC Alliance for School Integration and Desegregation (ASID). He is the Policy Coach for IntegrateNYC, a student advocacy group, and provides technical supports to NYC schools and districts working towards integration. He is a former special education teacher at Bancroft Middle School in Los Angeles. He earned his Masters in Education Policy from Teachers College, Columbia University in 2016.

**Diane L. Houk**

**Diane L.** Houk is Of Counsel with the New York City civil rights law firm of Emery

Celli Brinckerhoff &amp; Abady LLP where she represents individual and organizational

plaintiffs in fair housing cases. Prior to joining the firm in 2009, Ms. Houk co-founded

the Fair Housing Justice Center in New York City and served as its first Executive

Director for five years. Ms. Houk previously worked at the Civil Rights Division of the

U.S. Department of Justice in the Housing &amp; Civil Enforcement Section in Washington

D.C. from 1991 to 2004 and as a civil rights attorney in private practice in Milwaukee,

Wisconsin. Ms. Houk earned her J.D. in 1983 from Columbia Law School.