

## Statement of African American and Korean American community leaders

We are shocked and appalled at the circumstances surrounding the death of Latasha Harlins on March 16, 1991. We extend our deepest sympathy to her family and friends.

This senseless loss of a young girl's life reflects the worse type of violence perpetrated upon a consumer by a merchant.

At the same time, we are deeply concerned that this terrible incident of violence does not aggravate the relationship between African Americans and Korean Americans in our communities. Nor that the work of healing by African Americans and Korean Americans of goodwill over the past years will be washed away by the anger over this incident.

Since the spring of 1986, many African American and Korean Americans have worked together to build bridges of understanding between the two communities through the Black-Korean Alliance, church exchanges, joint business ventures, mediation projects, educational events, trips to Korea for African American community leaders, merchant support of community events and fund raisings, and mutual political support of community needs. These positive achievements reflect years of hard work and trust building and should not be destroyed by one tragic incident.

The death of Latasha Harlins challenges us to come together as a united multicultural community and acknowledge the often

**Stephen Yum** contributed to this story.

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painful process of learning to live together with people different from ourselves. Now more than ever, we need reason, responsibility and vision. Again, we extend our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Latasha Harlins.

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