

Cecil Corbin-Mark, a well-known and highly-respected leader in the environmental justice movement, passed away on October 15, 2020 at the age of 51. He was a life-long resident of Hamilton Heights in Harlem, New York, where his family has lived for the last six decades. It is a community he dedicated his life to, serving as the Deputy Director and Director of Policy Initiatives at WE ACT for Environmental Justice, a membership-based nonprofit he joined as the volunteer group hired him as its first paid staff member in 1994. In this capacity, Cecil helped develop and pass numerous bills in New York City and New York State, and managed WE ACT's Washington, DC federal policy office. He advanced the work – especially on energy and toxics – of this Northern Manhattan-based organization whose mission is to build healthy communities by ensuring that people of color and/or low-income residents participate meaningfully in the creation of sound and fair environmental health and protection policies and practices.



Cecil served on numerous environmental boards, coalitions, and committees during his years, including Friends of the Earth, New York Jobs with Justice, and the Center for Environmental Health. He was co-chair of the Just Green Partnership, and a member of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Law Advisory Group. He served on the steering committee of the BEA Initiative and the Windward Fund. He served on numerous advisory boards including Manhattan's Community Board 9 where he served as chair of the Historic Preservation Committee, Community Urban Wet Weather Federal Advisory Committee for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Urban Air Toxics Committee, New York State Cumulative Risk Assessment Work Group, New York City Department of Environmental Protection Water Quality Citizen Advisory Committee, Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board, Clean Air Network, Association for Clean Water Action, Clean Products/Clean Production Network, Environmental Justice Fund, Organization of Waterfront Neighborhoods, the New York City Environmental Education Advisory Council, and the Steering Committee for the Northeast Environmental Justice Network.

A political science major at his beloved Hunter College, C.U.N.Y., Cecil always had a passion for local, national, and international politics. His graduate degree in political science at Oxford University in the United Kingdom focused on radical political traditions of Africans of the Diasporas in the Americas. He lectured on the environment and environmental justice at Hunter College, Teacher's College, The College of Mount St. Vincent, Buffalo State, Cornell University, Yale School of Forestry, and Columbia University School of Public Health.

A pilot and a skydiver, Cecil had just taken up sailing. He also devoted time to mentoring young people and worked with the Friends of Island Academy, a program to assist formerly incarcerated teens. And he had financed and ran several summer basketball teams for neighborhood youth.

He is mourned by his WE ACT team and hundreds of environmental and justice advocates nationwide for his leadership, technical assistance, and camaraderie.

He is survived by his Mother Winnifred Corbin, his second Mother Merlyn Corbin, his father Lucas Mark, his Godson Nigel Holder, and other family members.