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## **Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas appoints the Rev. Dr. Cecil L. Murray to Commission on Jail Violence**

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas today announced the appointment of civil rights stalwart Rev. Cecil “Chip” Murray to the County’s newly formed Citizens Commission on Jail Violence. The commission, established last month with a joint motion by Supervisors Zev Yaroslavsky and Mark Ridley-Thomas, is charged with investigating allegations of abuse at the Men’s Central Jail and returning to the Board of Supervisors with recommendations for reform.

“After the 1992 riots, Reverend Murray, then pastor of First AME Church in South Los Angeles, became the pre-eminent moral force in the local and national conversation about the relationship of minority communities to the law enforcement structure. It is this voice, along with Pastor Murray’s wisdom and experience that he will bring to the commission.

“My colleagues on the Board have appointed people with laudable experience in the legal system,” the Supervisor said, and those perspectives will be of great service as we move forward to reform the jail system. To be successful, however, I believe the commission must engage the broader public – not just the law enforcement community – in a moral conversation, and few are as well suited to do this task as Cecil L. Murray.”

During his 27 years as FAME's pastor, Murray transformed a small congregation of 250 into an 18,000-person church. With multi-million dollar community and economic development programs, Murray brought jobs, housing, and corporate investment into South Los Angeles.

After retiring from FAME in 2004, Murray joined the faculty of USC where he is currently the John R. Tansey Chair of Christian Ethics in the School of Religion.

Murray did his undergraduate studies at Florida A&M University and after graduation, he joined the United States Air Force. Murray served in the Korean War as a jet radar intercept officer and as a navigator in the Air Transport Command. He retired after 10 years and was decorated with a Soldier's Medal of Valor. After leaving the Air force, Murray earned a doctorate from the Claremont School of Theology. Although he is now retired from the pastorate, he remains an elder statesman among religious leaders across the nation.

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