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To the Cooperative Hall of Fame Committee:

I am writing in support of Linda Leak's nomination to the Cooperative Hall of Fame.

Linda's strong leadership, vision and commitment to cooperative principles fueled an amazing record of 16+ limited equity cooperatives created in Washington, D.C.

I had the privilege and honor to work with Linda Leaks when she was Executive Director of Washington Inner-city Self Help, W.I.S.H. I served as Chair of the Board of W.I.S.H.

Linda inspired low-income, grass roots, primarily African American and Latino D.C. residents to stand up; speak up; and organize to create quality, affordable homeownership for themselves.

Due to the cooperative principles and covenants established by many of these cooperatives in their legal agreements, they will remain affordable for a minimum of 20 years.

The transition from renters with limited affordability and challenges ranging from quality of housing and self-governance, to home-owners has made a profound impact on these families and communities. As cooperative home-owners, families have the opportunities to participate in democratically governed and operated cooperatives. They have a voice and a stake in maintaining affordability. Most importantly, cooperative home-owners will earn a “respectable” amount of equity for cooperative home-ownership.

I was also profoundly blessed and inspired to work with and learn from Linda as we founded and cooperatively managed Ella Jo Baker Intentional Community Cooperative (EJBICC) for Activists. I served as President for eight years. EJBICC is heading into 20 years of operation.

Members of the Bernie Book Club were inspired to create a virtual town hall meeting to share information about Limited Equity Cooperatives as one solution to the affordable home ownership crisis. We featured EJBICC.

Ella Jo members shared how cooperative homeownership changed their lives. Having affordable homes allowed them to pursue their desired employment choices and make investments in training and educational opportunities for the adults and their children.

Working with Linda, fed my passion for working together as a community to change our circumstances. The cornerstone of Linda’s leadership and accomplishments is her energy; vision;

and commitment to cooperative principles. Her unwavering belief in Human Rights and Responsibilities guides her love for empowering people. I have been a friend and a witness to Linda's compassion and leadership for almost forty years. Her patience in training; informing; and inspiring residents to own their movements is an invaluable part of her legacy.

Community meetings in the evenings and on the weekends were enthusiastically embraced by this champion for motivating tenants to fight for their rights and hold elected officials and government representatives accountable.

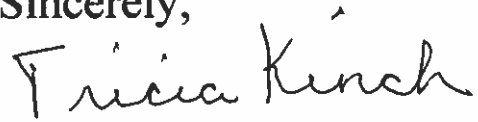
She instilled in us boldness and creativity in calling attention to our concerns. We went to Council Members' homes and handed out red paper houses to call attention to the need for them to take action to provide funding for affordable housing.

This model of limited equity cooperatives is being embraced and supported by the D.C. Council as one solution to housing affordability. Legislation has been introduced to create a Task Force to advise the D.C. Council on how to better support the creation; financing; and sustainability of limited equity cooperatives.

I will always be grateful to Linda for encouraging me to get my M.S. in Community Economic Development. Linda's contributions to the development of community leaders and communities have been substantial and great.

I strongly urge the Cooperative Hall of Fame Committee to induct Linda Leaks into the Cooperative Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tricia Kinch". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Tricia Kinch
Community Organizer
Housing Activist