

For immediate release



REMINDER: PRESS CONFERENCE TODAY

FRIDAY 11:30 PM SEPTEMBER 2, 2016

The Parsonage 33 S. 15th Street Allentown PA 18102

**For one candidate CRIME is PERSONAL:
MARTIN LUTHER AND CORETTA SCOTT KING MINATURE STOLEN
Friday August 26, 2016 from candidate Sam Bennett's family's second home
the abandoned, vandalized twice foreclosed on
"The Parsonage" next to her home The Historic Benner Mansion.**

**Allentown Police Apprehend and Charge Burglar
As burglar attempts to sell this one-of-a-kind sculpture to an Allentown scrap
yard Wednesday August 31, 2016**

Friday September 2, 2016, Allentown, Pa. – *Sam Bennett Candidate for Mayor of Allentown 2017* holds first post-announcement press conference. "Crime, perception of crime and compromised quality of life are the number one concerns of Allentown taxpayers. They must be the highest priority of our next Mayor of Allentown. Despite the dramatic decline of crime nationwide over the past 25 years¹ this remains the top issue for us as taxpayers and residents" stresses Sam Bennett, local businesswoman, thirty-year Allentown resident and candidate for Mayor of Allentown 2017. "For our tax dollars invested, we must feel safe. For our city to continue to revitalize - the reality and the perception of public safety must be improved."

¹ *What Caused the Great Crime Decline in the U.S.?* Matt Ford; The Atlantic; April 15, 2016; <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/04/what-caused-the-crime-decline/477408/>

"For me, crime is personal. Just this week, the foreclosed on historic home next door we just purchased as a second home for our extended family was just brutally broken into in broad daylight. Twenty years ago, I was raped in my own bedroom in West End Allentown.² Sixteen years ago, weeks after we purchased and moved into the abandoned, twice-foreclosed on Historic Benner Mansion, my car was stolen from the front of our home by a recently released Lehigh County inmate who we discovered later had been living in the carriage house in our back yard. And now, only days ago, the home next door we just purchased as a second home for our extended family was robbed in broad daylight."

The one-of-a-kind solid bronze miniature of the Martin Luther and Coretta Scott King replica of Allentown's Freedom Memorial on display at The Parsonage at 33 S. 15th Street Allentown PA for June 19, 2016's West Park House Tour was the target of this crime. Despite all new locks and other security precautions Bennett had in place - the burglars crowbarred the rear "Bilco" style basement door - and kicked in the inner basement door jamb to gain entrance to Bennett's second home, next door to her family's primary home The Historic Benner Mansion Bed and Breakfast.

Quick action by the Allentown Police Department's detective Ray Ferraro and patrol officers led to the statue being recovered days later when the burglar attempted to sell the statue to a local metal scrap dealer. As soon as Sam Bennett realized the statue had been stolen she reported the crime to the Allentown Police Department who swiftly reported to the scene of the crime. "We are extremely grateful to detective Ferraro and other officers who immediately circulated photos of the statue to local scrap metal dealers. Because of their swift action - as soon as the burglar showed up at one of these dealers, the dealer called police and stalled the burglar until officers arrived and apprehended the criminal. We are also very grateful to the business owner that cooperated with the police and made this recovery possible," stresses Bennett.

"We are very grateful for the return of this irreplaceable statue," emphasizes Sharon Fraser, Board President of The Freedom Memorial of the Lehigh Valley."

² *Candidate says she learned from '92 rape Allentown*, March 19, 2001, Daryl Nerl, mcall.com.

"This is a perfect example of the community and police cooperation essential to make crime fighting work effectively. I have always been impressed with Allentown Police Department officers - but I know that is not the experience of all residents. It is essential that all officers feel connected to and are respectful all City of Allentown residents - and that all residents feel connected to and respectful of City of Allentown police officers. The recovery of this one-of-a-kind Allentown treasure is a perfect example of swift, resolute and responsive action by residents, police and community."

But attention to the quality of life and neighborhoods is also absolutely essential to turning Allentown's crime situation around. Despite the revitalization and development of Allentown's five blocks NIZ zone - the adjacent neighborhood residents report that quality of life deterioration is at an all time high. "I have lived on Turner Street over thirty years" report Jim Bartholomew "and have won multiple Properties of Merit awards and was proud to receive a Grand Prize award³ - but nothing is more discouraging than seeing the revitalization of downtown and only blocks away we struggle with ever increasing quality of life deterioration in our neighborhood. If we just enforced the quality of life laws that are already on the books - that wouldn't be the case!"

When enforcement happens - powerful and immediate crime reductions can occur. "When we first moved into The Historic Benner Mansion in 1999 - we were told by police we had just moved into the city's second highest crime neighborhood" recalls Bennett. "Stabbings and drive by shootings were common place. We had two daughters attending William Allen High School and an infant son. Neighbors like Debra and Gregory Lamb, were moving out of the neighborhood. It was a bad situation getting worse by the moment. I analyzed the situation, and realized that all the crime was spilling out of the former Hary's Bar in the Hotel Traylor (now District Magistrate offices). So I gathered the neighbors together, suggested we pool our money to hire an attorney to close the bar down - and we were successful. We were all disappointed when the Mayor took credit for our hard work - but bottom line - crime disappeared as soon as

³ *Properties of Merit: Property owners earn city's gratitude*; October 17, 2007; mcall.com.

Hary's Bar was closed down - a great example of what enforcement of laws already on the books and neighborhood cooperation can accomplish!" shares Bennett.

"I will always be grateful to Sam" emphasizes Sue Kratzer, widow of late State Senator Guy Kratzer. "She has an amazing ability to get people to cooperate to achieve common goals - which is exactly what she did in getting a group of us together to pool our funds and hire an attorney to close Hary's Bar down. As a result, the crime that plagued our neighborhood virtually disappeared overnight."

Allentown Councilwoman Cynthia Mota stresses: "like Sam, I have personally experienced the shock and trauma of crime. I couldn't agree more that crime is the number one issue we must solve for our city. I know with her personal experience with crime plus her calm, warm, caring but tough businesslike approach to problems, Sam is the right person to be our next Mayor and solve our crime dilemma. She has proven over and over again that she that she cares about everyone - no matter what his or her race or income. Her husband is Latino; her son is Latino - that is exactly what we need in our next Mayor. Sam 'gets it.'"

PRESS CONFERENCE AGENDA

11:30 am Sam Bennett, Candidate for Mayor of Allentown 2017

11:35 am Sharon Fraser, President of The Freedom Memorial (formerly the Martin Luther and

Coretta Scott King Memorial), resident of N. 11th Street Allentown PA

11:40 am Jim Bartholomew, award winning home and property owner 6th and Turner Streets for over thirty years

11:45 am Dale Fritchman, Old Allentown Neighborhood Association Board Member, home owner 6th and Turner Streets Allentown PA (may not be able to speak due to loss of voice issues)

11:50 am Sam Bennett, Candidate for Mayor of Allentown 2017

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