

## **Curtis Sliwa**

### **CEO & Founder, The Alliance of Guardian Angels**



A bold spirit with a lust for life and amazing energy, Curtis Sliwa is a New Yorker in the truest and best sense of the word. Born and raised in the Canarsie section of Brooklyn, Curtis is a pioneer who forged his grassroots activism into a global vocation. Although offered a partial scholarship to study political science at Brown University, Curtis would find himself expelled from the prestigious Brooklyn Prep School during his senior year for student activism. In lieu of a brick and mortar education, Curtis enrolled in the reality of Fordham Road...a crime ridden section of the Bronx. As night manager of the local McDonald's, Curtis instituted a community clean-up program supported and welcomed by the company. Local volunteers, dubbed the "Rock Brigade," painted over graffiti, cleaned up vacant lots, boarded up vacant buildings and planted trees and gardens in the Fordham neighborhood.

In the late 1970s, determined to take back the community, Curtis expanded his neighborhood program to patrol the Number 4 Train, one of the worst subway lines in New York City, then known as the "*Mugger's Express*." Curtis recruited a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic team of volunteers who rode the subway between the toughest stops and used the legal concept of citizen's arrest to detain gang members and criminals for police. Initially they encountered resistance and skepticism from both transit and local police. Soon however, doubt was replaced with trust as volunteers became role models. Out of these modest beginnings, The Guardian Angels was formed. Today, The Guardian Angels has grown to include more than 60 safety patrol chapters worldwide. Under Curtis' tireless leadership, The Guardian Angels has also moved "Beyond the Streets," bringing the organization's message and approach to schools, families and community organizations. The Guardian Angels has created professional development training for educators seeking to reduce violence and bullying in schools; after-school activities to provide positive social outlets for urban youth; and a world-renowned Internet safety program called CyberAngels.

In addition to leading The Guardian Angels, Curtis also co-hosts the WABC Radio show, "Curtis & Kuby," one of the most highly rated shows in the country. Curtis' worldwide connections keep him aware of major breaking news stories across the globe and steps ahead of most journalists. However, Sliwa's passion for the "city that never sleeps" remains a constant fixation. He is featured frequently as a guest lecturer at colleges and universities and makes regular appearances on TV news-oriented programs. In 2004, Curtis and Ron Kuby were voted Top Talk Show Hosts of the Year by Radio and Records magazine, and have been nominated for numerous other prestigious industry awards.