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## MCJ Lawsuit Delays Medicaid Cuts, Gives Legislature Time to Reconsider

On October 14, in MCJ's lawsuit challenging massive Medicaid cuts, the U. S. District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi approved entry of a consent order continuing Medicaid benefits to 50,000 elderly and disabled Mississippians.



Outside the federal courthouse on October 14, Medicaid plaintiffs' attorneys Martha Bergmark and David Calder greet health care and policy advocates Mary Troupe and Judy Barber.

The court order in *Vinson v. Barbour* temporarily halted implementation of the most extensive reduction in elderly and disabled coverage ever imposed in the history of the national Medicaid program. No further action to implement the cuts will be taken before

January 31, 2005, four weeks after the legislature convenes for its 2005 session.

Attention has now returned to the legislative

forum, where Governor Haley Barbour has indicated his continued preference for eliminating

--Continued on Page 4  
See *Medicaid Cuts Delayed by  
MCJ Lawsuit*

## Legislative Hearings on Juvenile Justice Reform Set Stage for 2005 Session Missouri Officials Tout Their Successful Reform Effort to House Juvenile Justice Committee

The name Limbaugh is not often associated with progressive reform efforts. But in August, at the invitation of Rep. George Flaggs, MCJ and the Southern Poverty Law Center, Judge Stephen Limbaugh – Rush's cousin, came to Mississippi to advocate for comprehensive juvenile justice reform.

Judge Limbaugh, who describes himself as the most conservative member of the Missouri Supreme Court, testified at a House Juvenile Justice Committee hearing that incarceration is not a solution to juvenile crime and stressed the importance of being smart, not just tough, on crime. Judge Limbaugh,

a member of the Missouri Division of Youth Services Advisory Board, touted his state's nationally renowned approach to juvenile justice. Mark

-- Continued on Page 6  
See *Missouri Officials Tout  
Success of Community-Based  
Alternatives*

## Leaders Chart Course to Economic Empowerment

This fall, 75 consumer credit and economic development experts, lawyers, law students, legislators, and community leaders met in Oxford to chart pathways out of poverty through economic empowerment.

The 2004 Deep South Economic Justice Action Forum was convened on October 22-23 by MCJ, AARP Mississippi, Enterprise Corporation of the Delta and the University of Mississippi Civil Legal Clinic at the University of Mississippi School of Law in Oxford, MS.

“Conference attendees were the champions of successful programs and initiatives can be applied in Mississippi to stop predatory and discriminatory financial practices,” explained Leslie

Gross Davis, MCJ Advocacy Director and conference organizer. “They put forward initiatives that can succeed in giving low-income communities access to alternative, safe, and effective financial services.”

“I felt I was at an historic gathering,” commented MCJ President Martha Bergmark, “We left the forum ‘in action’ as part of an economic justice network. We mean to end poverty in Mississippi by enlisting the community leaders, the business enterprises, and the legal agenda necessary to break barriers and build bridges to economic empowerment.”

Conferees shared examples of the enterprises and the legal strategies they know are already succeeding in Mississippi and elsewhere.

They began to project what it will take to bring these strategies to scale for maximum impact and started crafting a persuasive case to make to investors who might invest in such strategies and to identify the community leaders and investors who will need to be in the room for a next gathering in 2005.

During the initial stages of planning and with the assistance of conference facilitator John Scanlon, conference organizers met with grassroots community empowerment groups for guidance on how to make the conference relevant to existing efforts. To help facilitate collaborative thinking on

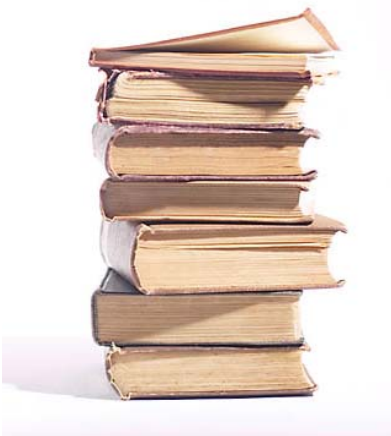
economic justice issues, there were cross-sector representatives (e.g., lawyers, professors, public policy analysts) on each speaking panel.

“We were incredibly fortunate to have the participation of economic justice experts and champions from around the South and the country, many of whom generously came at the expense of their own organizations,” Leslie noted. “We are very grateful for their contributions to our Mississippi effort. We also truly appreciate the participation of a terrific contingent from Alabama and look forward to future joint work on our many common issues.” ■

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## Resource Books Given To Conference Presenters

- *The Last Word on Power: Executive Re-Invention for Leaders Who Must Make the Impossible Happen*, Tracy Gross (Doubleday 1996).
- *How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work: Seven Languages for Transformation*, Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey.
- *Leadership Effectiveness Training*, Dr. Thomas Gordon (Bantam, 1977).
- *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, Malcolm Gladwell (Little, Brown & Company, 2000).
- *Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else*, Hernando de Soto (Basic Books, 2000).
- *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas*, David Bornstein (Oxford University Press, 2004).
- *Common Purpose, Strengthening Families and Neighborhoods to Rebuild America*, Lisbeth Schorr, (Anchor Books, 1998).
- *Enlightened Leadership*, Ed Oakley and Doug Krug, (Simon & Schuster, 1991).
- *Praying for Sheetrock*, Melissa Fay Green, (Fawcett Book Group, 1992).
- *Banker to the Poor: Micro-Lending and the Battle Against World Poverty*, Muhammad Yunus.



## Conference Presentations and Presenters

- Welcome, introduction, and framing – *Suzanne Keys, MCJ Board Secretary; Leslie Gross Davis and Martha Bergmark*
- The biggest things Mississippi communities can do to bring about economic empowerment -- *Bill Bynum, CEO, Enterprise Corporation of the Delta*
- The level, nature, and economics of poverty in Mississippi -- *Debbie Bell, Professor, University of Mississippi School of Law, and University of Mississippi law students*
- What does economic empowerment look and feel like in a community? Lessons from North Carolina, challenges of predatory lending, and solutions for Mississippi – *Keith Corbett, Senior Vice President, Self-Help*
- Breaking Barriers/Building Bridges: What works and how to apply it
  - Access day-to-day credit for effective living: predatory financing litigation – *Paul Bland, Trial Lawyers for Public Justice; David Calder, University of Mississippi Civil Legal Clinic and private practitioner; and Mercer Bullard, Professor, University of Mississippi School of Law*
  - Buy and maintain a house – *Stacy Canan, AARP Foundation Litigation; Joyce Nuszbaum Freeland, Freeland & Freeland Law Firm; Phil Eide, Vice President of Housing, Enterprise Corporation of the Delta*
  - Access capital to start and operate a business – *Senator Robert Jackson, Executive Director, Quitman County Development Corporation*
  - Own a reliable car – *Carolyn Hayden, National Economic Development and Law Center; Jeremy Eisler, Litigation Director, Mississippi Center for Legal Services*
  - Become financially literate – *Grant Hedgepeth, Office of the Attorney General, Mississippi Consumer Protection Division; Mattie Stevens, Mississippi State Director, AARP; Willie Lake, FDIC Regional Money Smart Representative*
- Public Official Panel: The legislative agenda and how to make it work-- *The Honorable Ronnie Musgrove, Former Governor of Mississippi; Senator Robert Jackson, Mississippi - District 11; Senator Gray Tollison, Mississippi – District 70; Christopher Davis, Jefferson County Coordinator, Campaign for Alabama*

### For More Information...

If you would like to learn more about the 2004 Economic Justice Action Forum and the Center's economic justice work, send an e-mail request to [mgalloway@mscenterforjustice.org](mailto:mgalloway@mscenterforjustice.org) to receive a Forum summary and notifications about upcoming events. ■

## MCJ Garners Consumer Law Fellowship Slot

On December 1, the National Legal Aid and Defender Association and the National Consumer Law Center announced the award of a two-year, \$60,000 Consumer Law Fellowship to MCJ. The Center is one of eight programs around the country to be selected from a pool of more than 100 applications. The fellowship will enable MCJ to create legal capacity in Mississippi

to promote economic justice, as envisioned by participants in the Deep South Economic Justice Action Forum.

NCLC has generously funded the fellowships with monies designated as part of the settlement of class action cases involving consumer financial institutions, in which NCLC was one of the plaintiffs' counsel. ■

### Economic Justice Action Forum Sponsors

Enterprise Corporation of the Delta  
Mississippi AARP  
Mississippi Center for Justice  
University of Mississippi Civil Legal  
Clinic

## Thank You to Our National Medicaid Litigation Team

Mississippi's Poverty Level Aged and Disabled Medicaid recipients are very fortunate to have a team of national experts litigating on their behalf in federal court. We are pleased to introduce the members of the litigation team and express our appreciation for their excellent work.

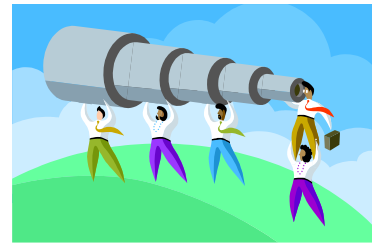
**Gene Coffey**, staff attorney at the National Senior Citizens Law Center in Washington, D.C., successfully argued plaintiffs' preliminary injunction motion before Judge Wingate on October 1st. A graduate of Vermont Law School, Gene worked as a staff attorney for Legal

Services of Northern Virginia, focusing on Medicaid issues affecting the elderly. Gene joined NSCLC in 2002, where he tracks developments in state Medicaid programs and litigates against state cuts. Gene recently wrapped up an agreement with Kentucky to terminate long-term care coverage of 3,000 elderly and disabled individuals by making eligibility standards stricter, but under the agreement the state will rescind the new standards and reinstate all individuals terminated from coverage.

**Steve Hitov**, Managing

Attorney of the Washington, D.C., office of the National Health Law Program, has lent his extensive expertise in Medicaid law as co-counsel to the Mississippi litigation. During his 30 years in legal services, Steve has supervised clinical education programs at Harvard and Western New England Schools of Law, and has served as a Staff Attorney, Managing Attorney or Litigation Director in programs in New York, Massachusetts, and Florida. Steve is the author of several book chapters and articles on the rights of

*Continued on Page 5  
See Medicaid Litigation Team*



*Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.*

*--Source Unknown*

## Medicaid Cuts Delayed by MCJ Lawsuit

*Continued from Page 1 -- MCJ Lawsuit Delays Medicaid Cuts, Gives Legislature Time to Reconsider*

the Poverty Level and Disabled (PLAD) category of Medicaid coverage as a cost-cutting measure. Legislators are expected to weigh in with a variety of alternative approaches to addressing state budgetary challenges.

The state's health care advocates continue to mobilize support for ongoing Medicaid coverage for a healthier Mississippi, reminding policy makers that for each state Medicaid dollar appropriated, more than \$3 in federal funds flows into the state's economy. The bond issue enacted in the recent special legislative

session is projected to attract just \$2 in investment by Northrop Grumman for each state dollar, a ratio Governor Barbour hailed as a good bargain.

The lawsuit, filed on September 27th, alleged that notices of the terminations did not contain the information legally required and unlawfully restricted the right to appeal. The lawsuit claimed that the state failed to determine whether people who were losing PLAD benefits might qualify for Medicaid under another eligibility category. The lawsuit also alleged that by eliminating Medicaid

coverage for the disabled Mississippians based on the nature of their particular disabilities, the state violated their rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

On October 1st, the district court granted plaintiffs' request for a temporary restraining order, which was argued by Gene Coffey of the National Senior Citizens Law Center. The court was persuaded that plaintiffs had shown they would likely succeed in their claim that notice defects violated their constitutional and statutory rights, and that

*-- Continued on Page 5  
See Medicaid Cuts*



*The lead plaintiff in MCJ's Medicaid suit, 81-year-old Aldora Vinson, has an income of \$597 a month. Her monthly prescriptions costs will come to \$1,177.*

## Medicaid Litigation Team

*Continued from Page 4 -- Thank You to Our National Medicaid Litigation Team*



Rims Barber

the poor, and has often engaged in class action litigation and multi-forum advocacy to insure that our governmental systems recognize and protect those rights.

**Rochelle Bobroff**, senior attorney at AARP Foundation Litigation in Washington, D.C., works on a wide range of issues affecting low income persons, including Medicaid, Social Security, and challenges to restrictions on legal services organizations. She was previously a staff attorney at the Legal Aid Bureau of Maryland. On

behalf of AARP, she has filed numerous *amicus curiae* briefs in the United States Supreme Court, federal courts of appeals and state supreme courts. Her colleague at AARP Foundation Litigation, **Dorothy Siemon**, has worked with her on the research and pleadings in the Mississippi litigation.

**David L. Calder**, a member of Rutherford Calder law firm in Oxford and a clinical professor at the University of Mississippi School of Law, is local counsel, along with MCJ

attorneys David Miller and Martha Bergmark, in the Mississippi litigation and has participated in all hearings to date. At the law school, he supervises the Domestic Violence and Consumer Protection Civil Legal Clinics. These clinical programs offer training and practical experience to law students who provide advice, counsel, and legal representation to low income families. He is a graduate of Mississippi College and the University of Mississippi School of Law. ■



Dr. Helen Barnes

### 2004 Champion of Justice Award Recipients

See Page 10 for details of the gala event.

## Medicaid Cuts

*Continued from Page 4 -- Medicaid Cuts Halted by MCJ Lawsuit*

they were threatened with irreparable harm because without Medicaid coverage, prescription drug bills would consume large percentages of their total monthly incomes. In some cases, the pharmacy bills actually exceed their incomes, and elderly and disabled people would have been forced off life-sustaining medications.

Mississippi Attorney General Jim Hood filed a motion to intervene and appeared at the October 1 hearing on the side of the plaintiffs, expressing his concern that their constitutional and

statutory rights had been violated. Defendants Governor Barbour and Medicaid Director Warren Jones were represented by private counsel.

On October 4, MCJ's Equal Justice Works Fellow David Miller and Oxford attorney David Calder represented the plaintiffs at a follow-up hearing to monitor the state's progress in continuing plaintiffs' coverage pursuant to the restraining order.

The legal team includes lawyers from the Mississippi Center for Justice, the National Senior Citizens Law

Center, AARP Foundation Litigation, the National Health Law Program, and Oxford attorney David Calder.

The state health care coalition includes the Mississippi Health Advocacy Program, Mississippi Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities, Mississippi Human Services Coalition, AARP Mississippi, Children's Defense Fund, Catholic Charities, MCJ and others, assisted by Leighton Ku of the national Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. ■

## “Train the Trainer” Model Helps Community Advocates Promote Juvenile Justice Improvement

MCJ’s “train the trainer” model on juvenile justice advocacy, developed by Juvenile Justice Fellow and lead trainer Jennifer Riley-Collins, was unveiled on September 18 in Lexington, MS. About 25 Holmes County high school students and parents participated in the day-long training, co-sponsored by MCJ and Citizens for Quality Education.

The training module was offered again in Jackson on September 25, when 25 community activists from

around the state gathered under the auspices of the Racial Justice Collaborative-funded Educational Democracy Project. Partners in this project include MCJ, Southern Echo and the Mississippi Education Working Group.

“Unfortunately, for many Mississippians, access to counsel and the courts has been denied,” Jennifer explained. When people do not know they have rights then they cannot exercise their rights.”

The model was developed to support the work of the Educational Democracy Project and equip Mississippi community advocates with the knowledge and skills necessary to challenge unjust systems.

“We have been very gratified by the response to these trainings, and we look forward to scheduling more such events for community advocates,” Jennifer said.

On January 12, MCJ and the Mississippi Young

Lawyers’ Child Advocacy Committee will co-sponsor a juvenile defender and “train the trainer” training for attorneys at the Mississippi Bar Center. Jennifer has developed an agenda that provides attorneys with best practices for challenging policies and unfair student discipline. The ABA National Juvenile Defender Center is assisting with the development of this training for lawyers who will be encouraged to provide *pro bono* representation of juveniles in youth court and school disciplinary proceedings. ■



“Train the Trainer: Juvenile Justice Advocacy Training Model” covers four components to enable community advocates to provide public education and advocacy in their communities:

- Training, technical assistance and resource development,
- Written and audio/visual materials for under-reached populations,
- Community participation, and
- Technical planning

## Missouri Officials Tout Success of Community-Based Alternatives in Legislative Hearings on Juvenile Justice

*Continued from Page 1 - Legislative Hearings on Juvenile Justice Reform*

Stewart, director of Missouri’s Division of Youth Services, also testified, explaining that in the Missouri system only the most serious juvenile offenders are placed behind bars. Most youth court offenders receive community-based treatment.

The Missouri juvenile justice system is lauded as the most successful in the nation. But this was not always the case. In the 1980’s Missouri closed

down its problematic and abusive training schools and reformed its system to provide a continuum of community based-services to court-involved youth. Missouri’s reliance on treatment-focused, community-based services has proved cost efficient and results in low recidivism rates.

Mr. Stewart emphasized the importance of engaging a delinquent child’s family and community in rehabilitative

efforts. Missouri’s treatment-based approach allows children and families to address the factors that contribute to delinquency, such as learning disabilities and substance abuse. The Missouri model also emphasizes education and job training. Youth court judges have at their disposal a continuum of sanctions ranging from community-based substance abuse treatment to residential behavior-modification treatment.

Because Missouri’s approach to juvenile justice is therapeutic and treatment based, Mr. Stewart explained, federal dollars support more than 60% of its budget. States like Mississippi that rely almost entirely on secure correctional facilities for delinquent youth must bear their own costs.

Missouri officials have

-- *Continued on Page 8*  
*See Missouri on Juvenile Reform*

## What are Community-Based Alternatives to Juvenile Incarceration?

**Community-based programs are the only proven method of combating juvenile delinquency.** According to the most recent research, family services and community-based prevention and treatment programs are tremendously successful in reducing juvenile delinquency, while incarceration only exacerbates existing problems and exposes children to new models of delinquency. For example,

Missouri's model system, with its strong reliance on community-based treatment programs, has a recidivism rate of 8 percent, while the national recidivism rate for training schools ranges from 50 to 70 percent.

Some of Mississippi's children will require residential treatment. Mississippi can and should look to the Missouri model to find policies that emphasize treatment over punishment. Missouri replaced a training

school model with a statewide network of small, regional facilities (no facility has more than 30 beds). Hallmarks of this program are well-qualified, highly trained staff; high quality educational programming; a 24-hour a day group and individual therapy regimen; and intensive family outreach made possible by the regional model. ■

### Examples of Community-Based Alternatives \*

- **Case management:** A treatment assessment and planning program where case managers coordinate educational and vocational programs for at-risk youth.
- **Intensive case monitoring:** Each youth is assigned a "tracker" (usually a college student) who monitors the youth's behavior and activities and acts as a mentor.
- **Job readiness/work experience program:** Provides a variety of experiences in the non-profit sector. In Missouri, the program is part of a statewide interdepartmental agreement.
- **Day treatment:** Year-round, alternative education, counseling, and life skills. Students attend classes for up to six hours each day and are involved in counseling and various community service activities before returning to their own homes.
- **Family therapy:** Counseling services for the entire family unit to reduce risk factors and develop protective factors that help children recognize and avoid delinquent behavior.
- **Home detention:** Staff provides frequent, random, unannounced, face-to-face community supervision. Youth have a curfew and are required to phone staff regularly.
- **Traditional community-based alternatives:** Restitution, community service, home curfew, academic tutoring, anger management, structured after-school programming, alternative schools, therapeutic classrooms, and substance abuse treatment.

\* For a description of several research-based treatment programs proven to reduce juvenile delinquency, see Blueprints for Violence Prevention, a project initiated by the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence ("CSPV"), at the University of Colorado, now funded by the [Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention \("OJJDP"\)](http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/index.html) at the U.S. Department of Justice. You can access the Blueprints on the web at <http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/index.html>

## Mississippi Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Coalition Presents Testimony at Senate Judiciary B Committee Hearing

Senator Gray Tollison, chair of the Senate Judiciary B Committee, invited the Coalition for the Prevention of Schoolhouse to Jailhouse to testify before his committee and recommend action for the next legislative session. The committee hearing, held on November 9-10, was the Senate's first hearing on juvenile justice since the Department of Justice sued the state over conditions at the Oakley and Columbia Training schools.

Coalition members Sheila Bedi and Ellen Reddy explained that hundreds of children incarcerated in Mississippi's training

schools and detention centers are subject to horrific abuse, medical mistreatment, and educational neglect – all of which have been documented by the federal government, independent consultants, and the state itself. Some of the children incarcerated in Mississippi have simply lost their way; many are incarcerated because their communities lack resources to provide them with services they need to become productive members of society.

Coalition members distributed expert reports and data documenting that incarceration is the most

expensive, least effective means of combating juvenile delinquency. Because children at the training schools receive no rehabilitative services, many find it impossible to escape old behaviors and end up cycling in and out of the system. Mississippi pays 12 times more to incarcerate a child than it would cost to provide research-based community-based services.

The Coalition stressed that the time for true juvenile justice reform is now and urged the Senate to take immediate steps to ensure meaningful, systemic reform. ■

## Missouri on Juvenile Justice Reform

*Continued from Page 6—Missouri Officials Tout Success of Community-Based Alternatives*

recently committed to help Louisiana reform its troubled juvenile justice system, and they are willing to offer the same assistance to Mississippi at no cost to the state. Rep. Flagg, who has traveled to Missouri to inspect their system, welcomed the offer of assistance and expressed his desire to import much of the Missouri model to Mississippi. "The Missouri model's emphasis on community-based programs not only is better for children than our boot camp-like training schools, but it's better for taxpayers," Flagg told the Missouri witnesses. "It costs less to treat a child in his home than it does to put a child in jail. If we adopt the Missouri model we can

actually be fiscally responsible and do right by our children."

In concluding his testimony, Judge Limbaugh reminded Mississippi legislators that caring for children and preventing crime are not issues owned solely by Republicans or Democrats but belong to all policy makers concerned about the future of their state.

Following the hearing, the House Juvenile Justice Committee pre-filed the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2005. The bill incorporates several elements deemed critically important by the Mississippi Coalition for the Prevention of Schoolhouse to

Jailhouse. For example, the bill recognizes that a juvenile justice system that relies solely on incarceration is adverse to the best interests of Mississippi's families and children; prohibits judges from sending first-time, status and non-violent offenders to the training schools; decreases the training school population; and establishes a continuum of community based sanctions in every county. The bill represents the first comprehensive effort to reform Mississippi's juvenile justice system since the Youth Court Act was passed in 1972. ■

**Skadden Fellow to Join MCJ Staff in '05**

On December 2, the Skadden Fellowship Foundation announced the award of a two-year Skadden Fellowship to Shakti Belway to work on educational opportunity issues at MCJ. Shakti will move to Mississippi next

summer after her graduation from Stanford Law School.

The success of Shakti's application for this prestigious award is a credit both to Shakti's impressive public interest and academic credentials and to MCJ's

Leslie Gross Davis's work with her to develop a project focused on Mississippi's significant need for systemic legal advocacy to secure educational equity. ■

**Coalition for the Prevention of Schoolhouse to Jailhouse  
Recommended Steps to  
Meaningful, Systemic Juvenile Justice Reform**

1. **Phase out reliance on state-supported paramilitary training schools.** Once this reform is gradually and safely implemented, the millions of dollars in savings should be invested in sanctions proven to rehabilitate troubled youth.
2. **Invest in community-based alternatives to incarceration proven to reduce juvenile delinquency.**  
The legislature should invest in a continuum of community-based alternatives to incarceration, including rehabilitation, education and mental health services for court-involved children.
3. **Protect the rights of our youth court-involved children and families.**  
The legislature should ensure that the youth court process is fair and uniform statewide. Detention facilities should comply with national standards and the recommendations of the Mississippi Juvenile Detention Task Force. The legislation should create and fund an Office of Juvenile Advocacy and Representation to provide advocates with specialized skills, oversight and adequate resources to ensure that children and families are protected and treated properly in the court system.
4. **Create a Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission.**  
The Commission should be charged with ensuring communication, coordination and collaboration among the state agencies charged with providing services to at-risk youth, youth courts, school districts families and communities.



*Thank You To  
2004 Champion of Justice Donors*

**Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Gurminder & Patricia Bedi  
Dr. Edward Bergmark  
Wilbur Colom  
David & Barbara Lipman  
Bob & Denise Owens  
Jay L. Wiener**



## 2004 Champions of Justice Dinner Social Justice—It's Catching



*Over 300 MCJ Supporters share in the celebration at Mikhail's Northgate*

If one word can capture the feeling of MCJ's second annual Champions of Justice Dinner on November 12, it would be "momentum." The campaign to make Mississippi the social justice state is on the move.

Last November, 200 MCJ supporters turned out for the first dinner; this year, there were more than 300 in attendance. Last year, the dinner raised \$65,000 for the Center's operating budget; this year, we topped \$110,000. The mood of celebration was catching.

Two social justice heroes, Dr. Helen Barnes and Rims Barber, received just a measure of the acclaim they deserve when they were named the 2004 Champions of Justice. Former Governor William Winter congratulated

both honorees for their achievements and welcomed Dr. Will Sorey and MCJ Board Chair Fred Banks to make the presentations to Barnes and Barber respectively.

Board Vice Chair Rob McDuff thanked the 250 individual donors and more than 15 law firms who are making it possible for Mississippi to have a home-owned capacity to put legal advocacy in service to racial and economic justice. He gave special recognition to the eight 2004 Champion of Justice Donors, whose contributions at the \$10,000 level anchor the individual giving component of the Center's operating budget. Bob and Denise Owens and Edward Bergmark were on hand to represent this generous group of contributors.

Banks recognized the more than 30 Mississippi organizations whose leaders have worked in partnership with Center staff this year on social justice campaigns ranging from educational and juvenile justice reform to voting rights and health care.

He also acknowledged two of the many national and regional partner organizations who have contributed to MCJ's advocacy – the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), represented by Legal Director Rhonda Brownstein and Communications Director Penny Weaver, and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, represented by staff members Susan Batchelor, Derek Black, and Trish Miller.

The Center's attorney staff – President Martha Bergmark, Advocacy Director Leslie Gross Davis, Equal Justice Works Fellow David Miller, Juvenile Justice Fellow Jennifer Riley-Collins, SPLC Staff Attorney Sheila Bedi, and Lawyers' Committee-funded Election Protection Coordinator Amanda Green Alexander – all shared brief stories about the impact of their work this year.

Tying it all together again this year as emcee was Supreme Court Justice James Graves, whose remarks provided much of the evening's humor.

*--Continued on Page 13  
See A Night of Fun!*

## December and January Are Matching Grant Months!

**A generous donor has offered to double the value of your year-end contribution by  
MATCHING IT—DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR!\***

**Say “Yes” I want to double the value of my year-end gift to MCJ during the matching  
grant months of December and January. Please put my support to work providing  
legal advocacy for racial and economic justice in Mississippi.**

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### Center Contribution Levels

**Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution of:**

- Champion of Justice - \$10,000     Angel of the Center - \$5,000  
 Benefactor - \$2,500     Patron - \$1,000     Supporter - \$500  
 Friend - \$250     Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*All donors will be recognized in the Annual Report, unless you request otherwise.*

**Thank you for your support of the Mississippi Center for Justice**  
*A Mississippi Non-Profit Corporation*

**P. O. Box 1023  
 Jackson, MS 39215-1023  
 601-352-2269 • fax 601-352-4769**

**Call Monica Galloway at 601-352-2269 for more information!**

**\* Up to a cap of \$25,000 in aggregate contributions.**

## Election Protection Makes a Difference on November 2

Last summer, Barbara Arnwine, Executive Director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, invited MCJ to be a Mississippi partner in the national, nonpartisan, Election Protection Coalition.

We readily accepted her invitation, welcoming the opportunity to help protect access to democracy throughout the state. Barbara generously provided Lawyers' Committee funding to staff a three-month "Know Your Rights/Election Protection Program" leading up to Election Day, November 2.

In August we had the good fortune to find newly-licensed Mississippi lawyer, Amanda Green Alexander to serve as the Mississippi Election Protection Coordinator. With limited time and a shoestring budget, Amanda had her work cut out for her. The rest, as they say, is history.

By Election Day, Amanda had recruited and trained more than 200 lawyers, law students and non-legal volunteers who provided expert legal help to voters as questions and problems arose throughout the day.

On November 2, legal

volunteers who staffed the central command center at MCJ fielded some 95 calls, and volunteers in regional command centers in the Delta, Oxford and Columbus and at roving locations throughout the Gulf Coast, Vicksburg and South Central Mississippi handled dozens of additional questions and complaints. Legal volunteers also monitored selected polling places and were available to intervene in person or place telephone calls to the appropriate election official.

"By the end of the day, we had resolved every complaint, either through first-hand contact or calls to the election commissioners and circuit clerks' offices," Amanda said. "We may have one issue that warrants possible litigation, but overall it was a successful day."

"Our volunteers were 'game day people'," Amanda continued. "I love the fact that everyone was up for the game and gave 100 percent. I believe with all my heart that we made a difference in Mississippi on Election Day. I look forward to continuing to make a difference by insuring access to democracy in our communities."

In the weeks leading up to

November 2, Amanda traveled the highways, lining up volunteers, organizing and conducting numerous regional training events on Mississippi election law, and arranging for extensive media coverage of Election Protection activities.

Election Protection is the nation's most ambitious non-partisan program for preventing election day disfranchisement. The coalition of state and national groups seeks to ensure that every eligible voter casts a ballot that counts on election day by providing voter information and assistance, expert legal help, poll monitors to help voters understand their rights and responsibilities, and assistance when problems arise. It targets historically disfranchised communities, including Hispanic, African American, and low-income communities.

Amanda is a 2004 graduate of Mississippi College School of Law. In 2000, she received a Masters in Public Policy and Administration from Jackson State University and in 1998 she received her B.A. in English and history from Tougaloo College. In January, she will begin a judicial clerkship at the Mississippi Court of Appeals. ■



*"By the end of the day, we had resolved every complaint, either through first-hand contact or calls to election commissioners and circuit clerks' offices..."*

*--Amanda Green Alexander  
MS Election Protection  
Coordinator*

### Double the Value of your Gift!

A generous donor has offered to double the value of your year-end contribution by matching it—dollar for dollar. This offer will apply (up to a cap of \$25,000 in aggregate contributions) to donations we receive in December and January.

Please take this opportunity to give generously! See Page 11 for details.

## The Great Mississippi Road Trip '04

By Merrill Tenney McKewen, MCJ Consultant

As Martha and I have traveled outside the state, raising funds and friends for MCJ, we've noted that many of our supporters either had never been to Mississippi or had been here long ago and never returned.

It is one thing to hear yourself say, "Come on down and see what MCJ is all about," and quite another to put together an itinerary that would persuade folks to actually get on an airplane and come to Mississippi. But Martha and I were willing to offer a tour and see what developed.

On Friday, October 15, 2004, eleven curious souls (including Martha and me) began what I came to call "The Great Mississippi Road Trip '04." We started at MCJ headquarters, where the staff hosted an informational meeting. Then we were joined by Civil Rights Movement activist/historian/hero, Rev. Ed King. With Ed we toured a variety of Civil Rights Movement sites in Jackson, including the home of slain hero Medgar Evers. Even though I believe everyone would have been perfectly happy to spend twice as much time listening to Ed,

we tore ourselves away to continue our journey.

Turning our caravan toward the Mississippi Delta, we headed to Greenwood where we experienced the most luxurious boutique hotel in the South. The Alluvian, located in a couple of restored downtown storefronts, is the brainchild of Viking Range CEO Fred Carl. We had wonderful food and fellowship at Giardina's Restaurant, located in the hotel.

We awoke to a clear, crisp fall morning. After exploring the downtown area of Greenwood, we headed across the Delta toward Greenville. Taking a short detour to see Indianola's cotton gin and cypress-filled bayou, we arrived at McCormick's Book Inn in time for a catered lunch served under the trees in the meeting area behind the bookstore.

A highlight of the trip was our time spent with store owner Hugh McCormick, who shared a bit of Greenville's literary history; Greenville Economic Development Director Tommy Hart, who brought in the economic history of the

Delta; Citizens for a Better Greenville Executive Director Joyce Parker, who filled us in on community efforts to improve public education and other services; and State Senator John Hines, who told his moving personal story of growing up in the Delta, becoming involved in politics, and working with MCJ staff to improve Mississippi's juvenile justice system.

What trip to Mississippi would be complete without standing on the banks of the mighty Mississippi River? The lookout point south of Greenville afforded our group a spectacular view of the river. A long string of barges chugged into view just as we were climbing the observation tower.

We left the cotton fields and catfish ponds of the Delta behind as we returned to Jackson for a progressive dinner hosted by friends of MCJ on Saturday evening. We had cocktails at the home of Millsaps College President Frances Lucas, followed by dinner at the home of Judy and Josh Wiener. Dessert was served at the home of MCJ board member Brad and Margaret Pigott. Jane and Price

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See Road Trip '04

## A Night of Fun!

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Proceeds of the dinner represent a critical component of MCJ's budget and this year cover just over two months of operating costs.

Forty individuals and businesses contributed an

eye-catching variety of items and services to a silent auction that raised more than \$3,000 and showcased the fundraising talent of Chicago supporter Celia Goodman Leventhal.

MCJ Business Manager

Monica Galloway and public affairs consultant Merrill McKewen oversaw the crew of volunteers who transformed the ballroom at Mikhail's into a candlelit tribute to the fall harvest and produced the entire event from start to finish. ■

## Road Trip '04

Continued from Page 13—See Great Mississippi Road Trip '04

Hildebrand and Kelly and Thorn Butler generously served as kitchen crew and bartenders at each location. The food was wonderful and the company was even better.

Those still standing after a full weekend of activities headed for a late night of live blues at the 930 Blues Café, owned by MCJ board member Isaac Byrd.

We learned that Mississippi – with all its complexity of

harsh history and rich promise – had a lot to offer in just a weekend visit. And I know the Mississippians had a wonderful time hosting the MCJ Great Mississippi Road Trip '04 (GMRT).

Now we would like to know if there is interest in a GMRT 05. It's possible we could persuade some of our pioneer group – including Bonnie Wishne; Celia Leventhal; Anita Andalman; Gurinder, Patricia and

Sheila Bedi; George Kohl and Maureen Feely, Elliott Andalman and Martha and me– to return for another round. If you'd like to be on the list for further notice, please send an email to Martha at

[mbergmark@mscenterforjustice.org](mailto:mbergmark@mscenterforjustice.org).

We are proud of the work of the Center, and we want everyone to experience the work, the sights and the people of our home state. So, y'all come see us – ya' hear? ■

## Out and About

Back by popular demand is this listing of our recent opportunities to take our message on the road. Getting word of the Center's work to those who can lend support – financially and with volunteer service – is an important way we promote racial and economic justice. Call the MCJ office and request an interaction with us for your office or civic group.

- Leslie recently began her term as an elected member of the board of directors of the Mississippi ACLU.
- David attended Southern Christian Services' 16th Annual Lookin' to the Future Conference in Vicksburg, July 21-23, joining juvenile service providers and advocates for three days of networking and training.
- On July 30, Martha, David and MCJ fundraising consultant Merrill McKewen visited Hattiesburg, where they met with Eugene Fair and with Ingram & Associates members Carroll Ingram, Jennifer Ingram Wilkinson, Joel Ingram and client relations director Joey Wilkinson. At the invitation of Mississippi Center for Legal Services Executive Director Sam Buchanan, Martha made a brief presentation about MCJ's work at MCLS's annual CLE training.
- Sheila attended the Mississippi Juvenile Justice Conference August 4-6 in Tunica.
- On September 4, Chicago-area supporters Roberta and Howard Siegel again opened their beautiful Hyde Park home for brunch and a meeting of potential host committee members to begin planning for a fund- and friend-raising event in Chicago next spring. Merrill and Martha were on hand to facilitate the planning. If you want to get involved, please let us know.
- Leadership Jackson has selected Leslie as a member of its 2004-05 class. She is participating in a curriculum of monthly leadership development activities sponsored by the Metro Jackson Chamber of Commerce.
- Sheila attended the September 10 meeting of the Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs' Juvenile Justice Advisory Board in Washington DC.
- On October 6, at the invitation of University of Maryland Law School Professor Tom Perez, Martha spoke about *Vinson v. Barbour*, the Medicaid lawsuit, to his health care policy and civil rights class. Class member Laureen Pak described her work on the case as an extern this semester for *Vinson* co-counsel Steve Hitov at the National Health Law Program.

## Out and About

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- October 7-9, Jennifer and David attended the NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund's Annual Civil Rights Training Institute at Airlie House in Warrenton Virginia, where Jennifer was a presenter and submitted a paper for the panel on strategies to mitigate zero tolerance discipline policies.
- At the invitation of University of Mississippi School of Law Professor Debbie Bell, Leslie and David spoke to her poverty law class on October 13.
- Martha was the lunch speaker at Jackson 2000's October 13 monthly meeting.
- On October 15-16 at Harvard Law School, Leslie was a presenter on community lawyering and the importance of coalitions in derailing schoolhouse to jailhouse at a national conference co-sponsored by the Harvard Civil Rights Project and the NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund.
- On October 18, Leslie and David attended the launch of the Mississippi Legal Advocacy Network, a component of the Community Advocacy Project created by the Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights and other partners.
- On October 21, Leslie and legendary civil liberties lawyer Alvin Bronstein shared the spotlight at a panel presentation hosted by the University of Mississippi ACLU chapter at Ole Miss School of Law.
- On October 21, at a seminar hosted by the Black Law Students Association of the American University Washington College of Law, Sheila was a panelist on decarceration – why prison is not the answer.
- Jennifer and Sheila were presenters at the ABA Juvenile Defender Leadership Summit in Nashville, Oct 22 -24.
- At the October 26 meeting of the Mississippi Young Lawyers' Child Advocacy Committee, Jennifer spoke about the need for a juvenile public defender network and training. The committee agreed to be a co-sponsor with MCJ of a lawyer training event in January.
- On October 28 in Biloxi, Jennifer attended the Mississippi Public Defenders Conference.
- When Equal Justice Works convened its annual public interest career fair and EJW Fellows conference in Washington DC, October 28-30, David was on hand to interview prospective summer interns and attend the training events. Martha attended her second EJW board of directors meeting.
- On November 4, The Jackson Medical Mall Foundation honored MCJ for its advocacy in support of Medicaid by presenting its 2004 Community Reinvestment Outstanding Individual Award to Martha.
- Leslie and Sheila served as facilitators at the Dismantling the Achievement Gap Conference on education reform sponsored by the Mississippi Department of Education, Mississippi Valley State University and Southern Echo, November 16-17 on the MVSU campus.
- On December 3, MCJ Benefactor and Jenner & Block partner Don Verrilli was honored by the National Legal Aid & Defender Association with its 2004 Arthur von Briesen Award for his outstanding *pro bono* service, especially his success on behalf of death row inmates in the U. S. Supreme Court case *Wiggins v. Smith*. At the NLADA Annual Conference, Martha participated in the Legal Services Corporation 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary observance and facilitated a meeting of the Southern Justice Consortium.
- On December 10, Sheila was a facilitator at the NAACP State Conference Legislative Retreat in Biloxi. ■

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## What's Inside!

- MCJ Lawsuit Halts Massive Medicaid Cuts
- Leaders Chart Course to Economic Empowerment
- MCJ "Train the Trainer" Model Helps Community Advocates
- And much more!

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