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National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Indianapolis Chapter, To Honor 2010 Breakthrough Women Award Recipients, Saturday, June 5

The **National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Indianapolis Chapter, Inc.**, (NCBW) will honor five outstanding women who have achieved extraordinary levels of success in their professional careers at the **2010 Breakthrough Women Award Brunch**, Saturday, June 5 at 10 a.m., at the **Conrad Hotel** in downtown Indianapolis. Tickets for the event are \$40.

The 2010 Breakthrough Women award recipients are:
(Biographical information follows.)

- Economic Development: **Joni Clarke**, assistant vice-president of community development, Old National Bank
- Arts & Culture: **Linda Gray**, nationally recognized artist
- Education: **Dr. Khaula Murtadha**, associate vice chancellor for Lifelong Learning and executive director of the Community Learning Network, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
- Personal & Professional Development: **Tonya Walton Pratt**, judge, Marion Superior Court, Probate Division
- Community Affairs: **Shannon Williams**, president and general manager, Indianapolis Recorder

"The NCBW Breakthrough Women brunch is an exciting and important event for our local chapter," said Patzetta Trice, president of the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Indianapolis chapter. "We are taking time to honor five outstanding women in our Indianapolis community who have broken barriers, have exceptional achievements, and positive impacts through their work. Recognizing these five honorees for their professionalism and their dedication and commitment to education, the arts, and to the financial and personal well-being of others is truly an honor for our Coalition organization."

Since 1988, the NCBW, Indianapolis Chapter, Inc., has recognized over 100 women in the Indianapolis community who have broken through barriers, achieved a level of accomplishment

above and beyond what is considered typical in her profession, and who have contributed to substantial progress in the Indianapolis community. The Breakthrough Women program was started under the leadership of attorney Fay Williams, a founder of the NCBW Indianapolis Chapter.

In addition to recognizing its Breakthrough Women Award recipients, the Coalition will also acknowledge its **Academy for Girls** program during the luncheon. The Academy for Girls is a mentoring program in Indianapolis for girls ages 14-18. The Academy for Girls program was established in October 1994 to assist in the development of young black girls who could benefit from exposure and interaction with positive African-American female role models in the community. The Academy's purpose is to provide experiential and educational opportunities that highlight information and skill sets not necessarily obtained in schools or at home.

Tickets: Tickets for the 2010 Breakthrough Women award ceremony and brunch are \$40 and can be purchased through the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Indianapolis Chapter, Inc. Individuals planning to attend the Breakthrough Women program can reserve a seat(s) by calling Crystal Babb, NC100BW event chairwoman, at 317-874-7328 or leaving her a message. Tickets will be sold through Tuesday, June 2. Due to planning purposes for the luncheon, tickets will not be sold at the door.

Biographical Information on the 2009 Breakthrough Women Award

Recipients

JONI CLARKE

Breakthrough Woman in Economic Development

As assistant vice president in community development at Old National Bank, Joni Clarke is answering a call to help families in her community with financial education and assistance. In 2004, Charter One Bank (Old National Bank today) created a market in Indiana opening 65 retail branches in the state. The bank specifically sought Clarke's expertise to create a new Affordable Lending Department, naming her vice president of the new area. In 2006, she took another positive step being named vice president and director of community development and community affairs where she implemented community programming and administered foundation grants and sponsorships for the state of Indiana.

Through the administration of grants and sponsorships, Clarke has approved nearly \$3 million for not-for-profit programs and organizations in Indiana communities that help continue the mission of assisting families in need. She facilitates more than 100 financial literacy seminars each year and facilitates training for bankers to increase the capacity and outreach in Indianapolis communities.

In her career, Clarke has helped numerous families dream bigger and take control of their future through sound financial education, economic empowerment and a change in spending behaviors. She has had a positive influence on many families in her community, as she created programs

that helped low income populations with derogatory credit issues and debt that has since enabled them to achieve the American dream of home ownership.

Clarke has also held positions with Habitat for Humanity of Greater Indianapolis and the Indianapolis Neighborhood Housing Partnership. While employed with Habitat for Humanity, Clarke's home ownership program assisted 133 low income families who later become homeowners. She also helped families understand the power of achieving financial wealth through homeownership, investing, and by saving. She strongly believes that most people can achieve success by being empowered with the information that can help them create financial change of upward mobility in their life. Throughout her career, Clarke has made it a point to assist those in need and to use her education and expertise in a positive way for the benefit of those in her community.

LINDA GRAY

Breakthrough Woman in Arts & Culture

Linda Gray is an artist in the true sense of the word. As many create their artwork on canvas or by sculpture, Gray has used her talent to express her thoughts and themes through quilting.

Gray grew up in an environment that embraced all types of crafts and artistic endeavors. Early on, she learned to knit and crochet and to use her grandmother's trundle sewing machine. She made doll clothes, table runners and blankets for her dolls from scraps of fabric. She made her first actual quilt using blocks that she received from friends she met during a five-year stay in Korea. When she returned to the United States, she took her first quilting class and she has been hooked ever since.

Gray's style in quilting has evolved over the years, going from rather traditional to very contemporary. She learned early on that adhering to strict rules was not her comfort as strict rules can be a hindrance to expression. Her subject matter changes with her moods and consequently, she has had a wide variety of themes with her artwork. As she continues to grow and express herself through her artwork, Gray looks back at the craftsmanship and fabric choices in her first quilting projects, and she amusingly wonders to herself 'What could I have been thinking?'

Gray is an artist who is just beginning to share her passion with the world. Several pieces of her works were displayed at the Indianapolis Museum of Art and she has pieces that are currently traveling around the country in a number of exhibitions.

Gray's most recent honor was having her artwork selected for an exhibit at the Historical Society in Washington D.C. for President Barack Obama's inauguration. Often, Gray will take time to reflect on her career, her accomplishments and her future. She has a simple hope for people who take pleasure in all forms of art. She hopes you enjoy seeing her work as much as she enjoys creating it.

KHAULA MURTADHA
Breakthrough Woman in Education

Khaula Murtadha currently is the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis associate vice chancellor for Lifelong Learning and executive director of the Community Learning Network. She is a big believer in getting involved and was the executive associate dean of the IU School of Education at IUPUI where she ensured that her school was making a difference in the lives of Indianapolis-area school children.

The veteran educator is making sure that her school is a powerful force in improving urban school systems from kindergarten through high school by adopting a two-pronged approach. First, the school prepares its future teachers with understanding the unique needs of city schools and the very different backgrounds of students. Second, Murtadha and the staff want to be advocates for the Indianapolis Public School system by providing support for programs while using those interactions to help train future instructors.

Under the direction of Murtadha, the IU School of Education at IUPUI has received a \$65,000 grant for Project Impact, a project where the school will partner with 11 Indianapolis neighborhood centers to help them support academic learning and child development, particularly in the areas of science and mathematics. The idea for the program grew following conversations between the neighborhood center staff and the IU faculty already working with the centers.

Under Project Impact, Murtadha and the School of Education will partner with neighborhood centers as they work together to provide professional development activities. IUPUI teacher education students will participate in service learning projects at the neighborhood centers. Instructional technology staff at the School of Education will analyze how to best use technology for communication and collaboration between the center and the schools.

IUPUI's School of Education has hosted state and national conferences on urban education, cementing its reputation as a leader in the field. It has also expanded the role of the Center for Urban and Multicultural Education, which develops research projects that benefit both the university and America's public school systems.

TANYA WALTON PRATT
Breakthrough Woman in Personal and Professional Development

Tanya Walton Pratt is a graduate of Spelman College and Howard University School of Law. She was elected judge of the Marion Superior Court in November 1996 and served as presiding judge of Marion Superior Court, Criminal Division One for one year. In January 2009, she was named presiding judge of the Marion Superior Court, Probate Division. This past January, President Obama nominated Walton Pratt to serve on the U.S. District Court, Southern District of Indiana. When confirmed by the Senate, she will become the first African-American federal judge in Indiana.

Prior to her election as judge of the Marion Superior Court, she was a partner in the Indianapolis law firm of Walton & Pratt where she practiced in the areas of family law, personal injury, probate and criminal law. She has been a master commissioner in the Marion Superior Court, and was a public defender in Marion County Superior Court, Criminal Division. She is a member of St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church, and a former chair of its School Commission.

Walton Pratt is the secretary of the Indiana State Bar Association; a life member and past board member of the Marion County Bar Association; a past vice-president of the Indianapolis Bar Association; and past member of the Board of Managers of the Indiana Judges Association. She is an advisory board member of the United Negro College Fund; a board member of Cathedral High School; and a member of the Indianapolis American Inn of Court (Master) and Delta Sigma Theta.

She has been a chair of the Indiana Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Holiday Commission and is currently serving her fourth year as a member of the Marion Superior Courts' Executive Committee. A graduate of the Indiana Graduate Program for Judges, she serves on the Probate Committee of the Judicial Conference of Indiana. She has received numerous awards, including an Outstanding Judge of the Year Award (Indiana Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Inc.).

SHANNON WILLIAMS

Breakthrough Woman in Community Affairs

Shannon Williams is the president and general manager of *The Indianapolis Recorder Newspaper* as well as the *Indiana Minority Business Magazine*. Her tenure at the *Recorder* began in 2000 as marketing and circulation manager. Williams was promoted to assistant editor a year later and in 2002 her position was elevated to editor; making her the youngest to hold such a title in the history of the company. After only six years at the *Recorder*, Williams successfully reached vice-president status. She was promoted to her current position earlier this year.

Williams, a mass communications major, also serves as co-host and producer of the “Recorder On Air Report” (ROAR). Additionally, she is the program coordinator and facilitator for *The Indianapolis Recorder's* Journalism and Writing Seminars (JAWS) program, which allows area high school students the opportunity to receive hands-on training in the field of journalism. She also maintains a weekly column that addresses issues ranging from national politics to local initiatives.

Among the issues that Williams has advocated for, both in the newspaper as well as on television, are homelessness, heart disease and HIV/AIDS awareness. Williams often speaks to youth about the importance of education. She is extremely involved in the community and has served as a mistress of ceremony at many local events.

Williams has won numerous publication awards from the Society of Professional Journalists and the National Newspaper Publishers' Association, and several individual awards for her feature writing. She has also been featured in *Ebony* magazine as one of the nation's future leaders. In addition, she was recently recognized by the Indianapolis Business Journal in the publication's Forty Under 40 feature and has been featured in *Who's Who in Black Indianapolis*.

She has been honored by businesses and organizations throughout Indiana, including earning Indiana Black Expo's top media award and the Center for Leadership Development's mass media award. Williams, a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha, has also won an AKA regional journalism award. She is a member of the National Association of Black Journalists and the National Council of Negro Women (Lawrence section).

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