

**RACE MATTERS FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE SYMPOSIUM
TO BE HELD ON JANUARY 28, 2011 AT THE WESTIN CHARLOTTE HOTEL**

Charlotte, North Carolina (January 25, 2011) - Research has demonstrated that children and families of color are disproportionately represented in the child welfare system and frequently experience disparate outcomes. Whereas children of all races are equally as likely to suffer from child abuse and neglect, the percentage of African-American and other minority children who enter and remain in out-of-home care is greater than their proportion in the population.

RACE MATTERS FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE is a collaborative leadership group led by the Juvenile Judges of the 26th Judicial District. It that brings together judicial officers, systems' experts, service providers and community partners who have set an agenda to reduce the disproportionate representation of and disparate outcomes for children and families of color in the juvenile justice system. "We envision a Charlotte-Mecklenburg community where the composition and outcomes of juvenile courts cannot be predicted by race and/or ethnicity," said District Court Judge Louis A. Trosch, Jr.

On January 28th RACE MATTERS FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE and its community partners will host a ground-breaking symposium that will examine disproportionality and disparities in the child welfare system. The event will be hosted at The Charlotte Westin from 8:30 AM to 1:00 PM. The keynote speaker, Dr. Carol Wilson Spigner, most recently served as the Kenneth L.M. Pray Distinguished Professor at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy and Practice and is best known for reform of public child welfare agencies and child welfare policy. Nationally recognized child welfare experts, Dr. Mark Testa and Dr. Dean Duncan of the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill School of Social Work, will also examine national and local research data regarding disproportionality.

Chief District Court Judge Lisa C. Bell invites community leaders and advocates, faith-based organizational leaders, representatives from small businesses and corporations, who wish to offer their leadership to help improve the quality of justice in our community. "I look forward to the community's presence and participation in the most significant initiative our Juvenile Court has embarked upon in the last decade," stated Bell. The symposium is free to all attendees. However, seating is limited. Those who wish to register, contact the Mecklenburg County Bar at 704-375-8624 or via email at racematters@meckbar.org by noon on Thursday.