



**For Immediate Release:**

**Friday, May 11, 2012**

**Magistrate Karen V. Johnson Receives 2012 Raising the Bar Award**

**Charlotte, NC** - Justice Initiatives, Inc. announced Magistrate Karen Johnson as the recipient of the 2012 Raising the Bar Award.

Karen V. Johnson has served as Magistrate for Mecklenburg County for 27 years. For the last 21 years, Ms. Johnson has served as the supervising magistrate. Her service as supervising Magistrate comes with no additional salary or benefit. Ms. Johnson is responsible for making sure the Criminal Magistrates Office is staffed and operational 24 hours a day every day of the year. Ms. Johnson arranges scheduling and coverage for Magistrates who are out sick on short or no notice, and many times after normal business hours. If Ms. Johnson often works the shift herself if she cannot find a replacement the task of arranging a 24 hour schedule for 28 magistrates is daunting. The fact that she does it without even a single support staff or any additional compensation is commendable.

Ms. Johnson's tireless efforts have made the Criminal Magistrate's Office an exemplum of efficiency. The office handles more than 200,000 matters each year, not including the weddings, search warrants, involuntary commitments, etc. It is Ms. Johnson's leadership both within the Magistrate's Office and in the greater court community that make her an outstanding recipient for this award.

Her nomination indicates "The Mecklenburg County court system is better for having Karen Johnson at the helm of the Criminal Magistrate's Office. The people of Mecklenburg County are beneficiaries of her hard work, diligence, leadership, and dedication. And those within the system are recipients of her straightforward attitude, her good stewardship for the Magistrates and their training, her sense of humor, and her heart for service and people. We are all better for Karen's service, whether we realize it or not. That is the thing about service behind the scenes: it is often overlooked, but it's the day to day dedication that makes an impact. From an office that deals with horror stories ranging from domestic violence, mental incompetence, juvenile delinquency petitions and criminal defendants, most on an emergency basis, Karen leads by example and treats each person with dignity and fairness."

Justice Initiatives, Inc. board member Brenda Stewart presented Ms. Johnson with the award at the Sixth Annual Evening at the Courthouse Fundraiser on May 8th.

Each year, this award is presented to honor a court employee who has made a significant and notable contribution to the advancement of the Mecklenburg County court system. The type of contribution made can vary. It may be related to performance, leadership, innovation, advocacy, public education or some other meritorious area related to the public good. The board of directors determines the relevancy, level of importance and degree to which each contribution has made a difference. The winner receives a check for \$1000.00, a plaque in recognition of his or her accomplishment(s) and the permanent listing of their name in the registry of past winners.

**For more information regarding this news release,  
Contact Brenda Stewart at [brenda@stewartmarketingandconsulting.com](mailto:brenda@stewartmarketingandconsulting.com) or 864.449.7700**