

February 28, 2021

Dear Judge AW Center Supporters,

The Judge Alexander Williams, Jr. Center for Education, Justice and Education is pleased to introduce this inaugural issue of our newsletter highlighting the most recent events, and activities. The Judge AW Center, located on the campus of the University of Maryland, College Park, is dedicated to addressing and developing signature programs, initiatives and prescriptions for solving dilemmas faced by underserved and disadvantaged communities in Maryland and beyond. The focus of the Center is to bring important voices and solutions to present challenges, and to have a meaningful impact on issues surrounding education, justice and ethics.

Through our spring and fall newsletter, it is our hope to share with you many of the exciting initiatives and programs sponsored by the Judge AW Center. Some of these initiatives include (1) **The Bridge the Digital Divide initiative** is a campaign seeking to promote digital literacy and learning, including computer and social media literacy skills, among youth, low-income, elderly, the reentry and returning citizens populations, disadvantaged communities and marginalized populations currently impacted by inequalities in access; (2) **The Leadership Development program** provides an opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students to work at the Center in close collaboration with the staff at the Judge AW Center and partner organizations, to conduct research on current policy, advocacy, and social justice issues relevant to the Center's mission; and (3) **Perspectives on Justice (POJ)**, a weekly podcast series featuring interviews with guests, experts and commentary by Judge Williams on contemporary and hot button issues centered around education, criminal justice reform and social justice.

I have been enormously encouraged by the impact that my role in public service has had on the shaping and strengthening of our initiatives. On December 2, 2020, I chaired the 7-member Commission on Restoring Integrity in Policing, which issued its final report on the present-day circumstances and challenges to policing at the Baltimore City Police Department. This experience provided insight into the Center's focus on criminal justice reform. With respect to the Center's initiative surrounding the challenging national issue of fairness in legislative representation, I am pleased to report that on January 12, 2021, Governor Larry Hogan named me Co-Chair of the Maryland Citizens Commission on Redistricting.

I wish to express my appreciation to the dedicated staff, the Board of Directors, Dr. Gregory F. Ball [Dean of The College of Behavioral and Social Science], and Dr. Joseph Richardson [Chair of The African-American Studies Department] all of whom provide tireless energy and commitment to implementing the mission of the Judge AW Center. I would also like to give a hearty welcome to Karen Bond, The Director of Outreach and Strategic Partnerships, as a valuable addition to our team at the Judge AW Center.

Finally, we greatly appreciate and acknowledge the interest and continued encouragement of our many supporters, contributors and sponsors who have generously provided advice, feedback, suggestions and financial support. We look forward to making this newsletter a bi-annual publication.

Best Wishes,



Judge Alexander Williams, Jr. (Retired)  
Founder and Executive Director