



THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

January 18, 2022

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Judge C. Renee Little

By Rick Handford

“JUSTICE”

Cheryl Banks introduced Judge C. Renee Little, our speaker for the day. Renee is a judge in the 26th Judicial District, a native of Charlotte, and a graduate of Olympic High School, Clark Atlanta University, and the University of Florida Levin College of Law. A skilled facilitator, Ms. Little has presented multiple talks on Racial Equity in the Courts and hosted numerous community forums on the topic.

She was the inaugural chair of the Mecklenburg County Bar Juvenile Law Section and she co-founded the Mecklenburg County Juvenile Court Youth Empower Fair and Youth Summer Enrichment Program; and is a member of the Leadership Team of Race Matters for Juvenile Justice, a collaborative 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.

Renee began by thanking the Club for having her, and asking the crowd to say “I am here!”, and to remember those who are not here. She also said “Happy New Year!”, and branded 2022 as “Twenty-twenty *New*”, as it provides us with a new opportunity to see and to serve each other despite the challenges, not only of the pandemic, but also the ills that continue to plague our society.

She shares our belief in “Service above Self”, and admires the fact that that we have all chosen to serve. She thanked us for electing her as one of our judges, and for placing our trust in her.

She then turned the conversation to MLK, and the day to celebrate his birth, which is also known as a day of service. She asked for some quotes from MLK that we remember and was rewarded with “I have a dream”, “I choose love”; and shared her favorites, “The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward Justice”, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to Justice everywhere”, and “True peace is not merely the absence of tension, it is the presence of Justice”.

Judge Little is a first generation American of Liberian descent, and she noted that Liberia was the first republic formed in Africa. Her Grandmother was a mayor in West Africa and had to flee a coup, wheedling her way onto a plane and making it to the United States.

Her passion is advocating for children, and as a judge it is seeing that they receive justice under the law. Justice, broadly defined, is people receiving what they deserve, including accountability for any wrongdoing. It is also applying the Law equally and impartially, but mostly it is doing the right thing because it is the right thing. She feels that it is important that everyone’s dignity is preserved, and takes the time to understand them, and to make sure that they understand the law.

She challenged us to reimagine Justice in and the form that it takes in our own lives, and to do Justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly among your fellow men. She then gave her definition of Justice, beginning with the letter ‘U’.

J

Understanding (even if not agreeing)

Service (see others as if they were you)

Truth

Inspiration & Hope

Courage of convictions (doing what is right)

Equity (Fair to all, do no harm)

And the **J** stands for Joy in service to others.

Spend some time in the 2020-*New* year thinking about how you can bring more Justice into your world, and doing it!

*A recording of the program is available here: <https://vimeo.com/667458753>

The program introduction begins at 9:50 minutes.