

**Hon. Marjorie Laird Carter**

**October 16, 2010, San Francisco, California**

The cry has been “we need more women on the bench.” We need more diversity. It makes a difference.

Our speakers at this conference have shown that women on the bench do make a difference.

NAWJ does make a difference in many lives. Actually, it is the members of NAWJ that make the difference.

There is a woman in Alaska, confident in getting a job when she is released from custody and looking forward to her life.

There is a child in St. Louis who has decided to stay in school and has found someone to be her friend and mentor, because of the Color of Justice Program.

There is a prisoner in New York that can give birth without being shackled. But not in California.

There is a law student in Ohio who was overwhelmed and now feels she has a direction and support along the way.

There are children in Virginia who listen to their mother read a bedtime story, even though she is incarcerated miles away.

There are judges throughout the world who feel more confident about handling their cases and know they can find the answers they need.

Because of our position on the bench, we are in a unique position to make a difference more than just in the courtroom.

As we look at the many activities of NAWJ we see judges involved helping to raise awareness in many areas.

We are only as strong as your involvement.

There are a wide variety of opportunities -

- Arrange a program in your community such as the Color of Justice

- Be a mentor for law students at Mentor Jet programs

- Join a committee (we have over 20)

- Come up with ideas for programs and projects

- Encourage qualified women to apply for Judicial positions at all levels

- Participate on an educational panel

- Help write an amicus brief

Finding resolutions to matters that primarily effect women can benefit all of us.

These are not just “women’s issues” and concerns.

Look back at what we have done since that day in 1979 when the few women judges met.

With the increase in the number of women on the bench we can reach further and be more effective.

So do what you can, in your own way – you can make a difference to a woman in prison, a child in school, a judge in Africa – and do so much more.