

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE!!!

CONTACT: LaToya Davis
662-334-1122 or 1-888-949-
9754

**COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS PARTNER TO LAUNCH
THE MISSISSIPPI LEGAL ADVOCACY NETWORK**

On Monday, October 18, 2004 at 6:00 PM, a group of Mississippi lawyers, community leaders and elected officials, will gather at Mikhail's restaurant in Jackson, for the launching of the Mississippi Legal Advocacy Network (MLAN). MLAN will be a component of the newly formed Community Advocacy Project (CAP), which is a collaborative between three community-based organizations, Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights (MWCHR), Mississippi Action for Community Education (MACE) and Quitman County Development Organization (QCDO). CAP is a new initiative designed to provide individuals across the state with critical information about their legal, constitutional and human rights. The main objective of CAP is to implement a state-wide "Know Your Rights" campaign. Through CAP, local residents across the state of Mississippi will receive information, organizing support and legal assistance.

Through MLAN, CAP partners will partner local advocates with affected communities to develop a statewide response network to address issues affecting

Mississippi's citizens, including: employment rights; parents' rights; children's rights; disability rights; environmental injustices; social security benefits denials; predatory lending; voter disfranchisement; biases in the criminal justice system and housing discrimination. MLAN will hold community "Know Your Rights" forums, legal clinics, public hearings and legislative briefings in local communities.

In partnership with the Magnolia Bar Association, North Mississippi Rural Legal Services, Mississippi ACLU, the Mississippi Center for Justice, Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance (MIRA) and other advocacy groups, MLAN will develop an effective referral system that will provide local residents with greater access to the legal process. The group will publish a referral directory that will include a listing of local attorneys, as well as out-of-state lawyers who participate in the network. Network members also will review potential cases, provide consultations and legal representation. MLAN also is establishing Legal Help Hotlines in key areas of the state. Hotline lawyers and paralegals, will field hotline complaints, answer basic questions and assist individuals with finding appropriate representation. The Network also will seek to recruit prominent Mississippi firms to provide pro bono representation for the poor.

For more information, call 662-334-1416 or 1-888-949-9754.

-END-