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## The Judge Tiffany B. McCord “Just Like You” Empowerment Program

Alabama Institute for Social Justice (AISJ) is proud to partner with Judge Tiffany B. McCord to implement **The Judge Tiffany B. McCord “Just Like You” Empowerment Program**.

Women, particularly Black and minority women, remain underrepresented in our government, our boardrooms, and countless other careers, resulting in a loss of talent, experience, and perspectives. The obstacles that prevent women from achieving career equity begin early in life when young girls internalize societal messages and cultural expectations that women of their background are not represented or successful in certain careers. These impressions can prevent young women from reaching their full potential and have a detrimental effect on their lives, community, and society.

Judge McCord was inspired to create **The Judge Tiffany B. McCord “Just Like You” Empowerment Program** after encountering a Career Barbie Doll, manufactured by Mattel/Fisher-Price, that portrayed a judge who was Black. She realized anew, in a personal way, that children who have the opportunity to see representation of their own ethnic backgrounds in all types of careers could be influenced to expand their expectations and internalize the breadth of what is possible for their own lives.

Today, in cooperation with AISJ and Title I elementary schools in Montgomery, Alabama, the goal of the **“Just Like You”** program is to empower and encourage girls to reach their full potential by bringing in local career women who interactively discuss with school-aged girls how they pursued the path to success in their fields. After the presentation, each girl walks away with a career guide and a Barbie Doll of her very own that both represents that career and portrays the diverse ethnic background of the girl receiving it.

When girls have the opportunity to see themselves reflected in real-life, confident, career women who look like them, it can have a profound, life-changing effect on their ability to imagine a successful future in their career of choice. Playing with the dolls afterward, at home and with friends, serves to reinforce and remind the girls that they have the power to determine their own paths forward.

***Judge Tiffany B. McCord**, who serves as a District Judge in historic Montgomery, Alabama, was empowered by her mother, who grew up on a farm in rural Alabama and stressed the importance of education, to become an award-winning graduate of Auburn University at Montgomery and Jones School of Law. Blazing a trail as a young, female, African-American attorney in criminal, civil, and family law, she was admitted to practice in multiple venues, from the Circuit Court of Appeals to the Alabama Supreme Court. A member of several bar associations, local leadership training organizations, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Judge McCord also serves on the Board of Directors for several institutions—from Kershaw YMCA to Habitat for Humanity—and Alabama State University Board of Trustees, and strives to embody the ideal of “Legal Equality and Justice for All” in her community.*

***Alabama Institute for Social Justice (AISJ)**, originally established as a child-care-advocacy agency known as the Federation of Child Care Centers of Alabama (FOCAL), has existed as a nonprofit organization since 1972. Our mission is to engage Alabamians by mobilizing communities, setting and acting upon a racial equity and social justice policy agenda, and creating peace through racial reconciliation and healing.*