



Joyce Ann Brown



On November 3, 1989, **Ms. Joyce Ann Brown** was released from prison after serving nine years, five months and 24 days for a crime she did not commit. She would later have her record exonerated by the state of Texas.

A native of Texas, Joyce Ann Brown was born in Wills Point, Texas, and moved to Dallas at the tender age of ten. In order to remove the plexiglas that stood between Ms. Brown and her only daughter, Koquice Spencer, Ms. Brown earned a college degree from Central Texas College (CTC) while serving time for a crime she did not commit. After being released from prison, Joyce Ann worked for Dallas County Commissioner John Wiley Price.

The vision to build an organization on the cornerstone of Justice and Equality began in 1989 when Joyce Ann Brown was released from prison. Ms. Brown’s initial goal was simply to nurture change in an inequitable judicial system by supporting the wrongfully convicted. But her passion to support others who have lost their voice in the community soon led her to expand her vision. Thus, **Mothers (Fathers) for the Advancement of Social Systems, Inc. (MASS, Inc.)**, was formally incorporated in 1993. **Ms. Brown, MASS Founder and Chief Executive Officer** has maintained an active involvement in the organization’s growth for over a decade.

MASS, Inc. is a nonprofit organization supporting innocent people falsely accused and incarcerated within the U.S. Criminal Justice System. MASS assists formerly incarcerated people being released from prison readjust to life without bars, while providing support for the children and families of adult offenders at high risk for substance abuse, medical or emotional disorders and poverty. MASS has two divisions, The Innocence in Prison Program and the Reintegration to Society Program. The Ryan White HIV Program and the Youth Program are initiatives within the divisions. **MASS has a proven successful track record for overturning cases against the falsely accused** and is currently funded by private donations, other nonprofit foundations, fee-for-service contracts, the City of Dallas, and recently opened an office in Washington, DC Shaw Community.

MASS held its first UMOJA (Unity) Awards in 1996, keynote speakers have included among others, the late nationally acclaimed attorney **Johnnie L. Cochran, Jr.**, civil right activists/comedian **Dr. Dick Gregory** and actress/comedienne **Phyllis Yvonne Stickney**.

Ms. Brown is a spokesperson for the importance of education, family, and the need to prevent the young from making costly mistakes affecting the rest of their lives. Recent MASS special event speaker’s includes *CSI: New York*, actor/author **Hill Harper** (*Letters To A Young Brother MANifest Your Destiny*) and actor **Rockman Dunbar**, *Prison Break* and *Showtime, Soul Food*.

October 2009, Ms. Brown was recognized by the U.S. House of Representatives with a Congressional Record honoring her 20 years of Freedom and Fighting for Justice.

Ms. Brown’s national talk show appearances include *CBS 60 Minutes* and *60 Minutes II*, *Good Morning America*, *Prime Time Live*, and *Inside Edition* (partial listing). She has been featured in many publications such as **JET** and **Ebony Magazine**. She has spoken at many universities, political forums and conferences within the United States and abroad. Keynote/speaking engagements include the **Harvard University** John F. Kennedy School of Government Black Policy Conference, **Essence Music Festival: Empowerment Seminar**, and **APRI's** 37th Annual National Educational Conference (partial listing).

Joyce Ann Brown is CEO/Co-Founder of JAB Productions, LLC. **Ms. Brown’s true life story titled “Redemption” will start production spring 2010, and will be directed by Golden Globe award winner Brian Dennehy.**

Deprived of her freedom for nearly a decade, Ms. Brown enjoys spending quality time with her daughter Koquice M. Spencer, granddaughters Brittany and Jereny, and her great-granddaughters Jh’Mia and Myia.

“A moving tale of one woman’s faith in herself that justice would someday prevail”

– The Boston Herald



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 111th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 155

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2009

No. 159

House of Representatives

CONGRATULATING JOYCE ANN
BROWN ON CELEBRATING 20
YEARS OF FREEDOM AND FIGHT-
ING FOR JUSTICE

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 29, 2009

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam speaker, I rise to express my best wishes to celebrate the life and achievements of Joyce Ann Brown. I had the pleasure of having Ms. Brown serve on a reentry panel during the 39th Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Annual Legislative Conference. Ms. Brown was unjustly convicted of a crime she did not commit and served nine years, five months and 24 days in prison before this injustice was realized and the guilty verdict was reversed. Upon release, Joyce started the not for profit organization, Mothers (Fathers) for the Advancement of Social Systems Inc. (MASS Inc.) in Dallas, TX. This organization focuses on assisting released ex-offenders reintegrating into society.

The reentry of ex-offenders is an issue of very high priority and importance to me and I am personally invested in the success of organizations like MASS, Inc. With the passage of the Second Chance Act in 2008, organizations such as MASS will benefit from additional federal grant funding to strengthen programs that aid ex-offenders in becoming productive contributing members of society.

Throughout my career, I have fought for the underserved and underrepresented and on my journey have come to admire Joyce Ann Brown for all her work and achievements in the area of social justice. Ms. Brown spent three years writing letters to appeal the atrocious injustice she faced and continued to fight upon release. Therefore, I am delighted to be included in commending Joyce Ann Brown and would like to thank her for her assistance with our work here on the hill. The organization she has created has helped many ex-offenders as well as their families, and has provided the support needed for a healthy society.

Providing support to ex-offenders is paramount to becoming productive citizens, taxpayers, mothers and fathers. Research has shown that successful employment interventions among ex-offenders benefits not only the ex-offender, but also his or her family, social networks, communities and society at large. The benefits reaped by society through the MASS organization and the work of Joyce Ann Brown are vital to the preservation of a healthy society and should rightfully be congratulated and recognized.



MASS IN ACTION



Photo by: Blessed Enterprises Photography

*“To judges, politicians, parents and teachers [I ask] while our youth are dropping out of school, involved in criminal activities and not voting, **the tale being told is incomplete.** There are youth out there looking and desiring mentoring and opportunities to love and be loved. What are you doing about it?”*

Mothers (Fathers) for the Advancement of Social Systems Inc., (MASS, Inc.) is a 501(C) (3) not-for-profit organization and has developed over the past fifteen years while effectively providing community-based programs to those least likely to obtain help elsewhere. The vision to create the organization initially arose when **Joyce Ann Brown** was released from prison for a crime **she did not commit** in 1989. The organization helps Formerly Incarcerated Persons and their families who are steadfastly endeavoring to overcome economic hardship and a host of other social stigma to become law-abiding productive citizens. Over the year’s MASS services has expanded to include others who have been directly or indirectly impacted by the judicial system and need help in becoming self-sufficient. Specific services include Personalized/Family Counseling, Case Management, Extended Learning, Job Development/Placement and Housing assistance.

Over 80 percent of **our clients** are from minority groups and 90 percent are below the poverty standard when they request MASS assistance. Most are African American because of their disproportionate representation in prison populations. MASS served over **660 adult clients** last year and over **150 Family Members** since they are themselves at high risk of continuing the cycle of crime and poverty. Our operational structure is listed as follows:

- **Youth and Family** - Helping families of incarcerated persons effectively prevent the continuing cycle of crime and poverty through individual and family counseling, special events and leadership programs.
- **Return to Society** - Helping Formerly Incarcerated People who are striving to become productive citizens’ Transition from a life behind bars too gainful employment and self-sufficiency.
- Public advocacy of the innocence in Prison and the issues that contribute to the escalation of wrongfully convicted persons.

Our programs are designed to assist long-term family goals and encourage law-abiding, productive citizenship.

Joyce Ann Brown Speaks...



Austin, TX (March 2005) - Joyce Ann Brown addresses crowd at Family Education Day. Men and Women, black and white, young and old, rich and poor from across the state of Texas convened on the steps of the State Capitol to show Texas Legislators the faces of the people affected by the Texas criminal justice system. The event was organized by MASS and supported by State Representatives Terry Keel, Terri Hodge and Roberto Alonzo.



Ft. Worth, TX (July 2006) - Joyce Ann Brown, CEO/Founder Mothers (Fathers) for the Advancement of Social Systems, Inc. (MASS), challenge attendees at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the MASS and Texas Inmate Families Association (TIFA) office grand opening in Fort Worth, Texas. The MASS/TIFA collaboration provides re-entry services to formerly incarcerated persons and those currently incarcerated and their families. The Ft. Worth office was made possible by grant funding from the Sid Richardson Foundation. Visit www.massjab.org for more information about Joyce Ann Brown and MASS.



Joyce Ann Brown to be a keynote speaker at Essence Music Festival (7/1/2006)

Essence Magazine has invited **Joyce Ann Brown, MASS (President/CEO)** to be a keynote speaker at its annual **Music Festival** that will be held this year on July 1-3 in Houston, Texas. Ms. Brown will participate in the **Empowerment Seminar** that will begin at 11am on Saturday, July 1, 2006 at Reliant Center, One Reliant Park, in Houston. The topic will be the Community Call: Opening the Doors-Re-Entering Society.

L to R: Kimberly Jenkins-Snodgrass (President, JAB Productions, LLC), Professor Lani Guinier and Joyce Ann Brown share a moment at the Harvard Black Policy Conference.

Joyce Ann Brown speaks at Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government Black Policy Conference

(4/22/2006)

Joyce Ann Brown, President/CEO MASS Inc., joins "Creating the Road Back: Successful Strategies in Re-Entry" panel for the upcoming Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government Black Policy Conference.

Kamala Harris, District Attorney, San Francisco will moderate the panel. Other panel participants includes, **Elizabeth Gaynes**, Director, The Osborne Association, **David Lewis**, Associate Director, Free at Last and **Lance Ogiste**, Director of the Community Relations Department of the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office.



APRI 37th Annual National Educational Conference (8/19/2006)

Joyce Ann Brown, MASS Inc., Founder/ CEO joins panel focusing on "Social Justice" with **Danny Glover** and **Judge Greg Mathis** at **APRI's 37th Annual National Educational Conference**, Saturday, August 19, 2006, at the Marriott Detroit, Renaissance Center in Detroit, Michigan.

L to R: Danny Glover (Actor/Activist), Joyce Ann Brown (CEO/Founder MASS, Inc./Activist), and Judge Greg Mathis (Judge/Activist/Actor) listen to conference attendees.

MASS Most Recent Success Story...

Favorable Court Decision, Mary Bienvenue Barbosa: MASS hired attorney Cheryl Wattley to provide legal support for Ms. Barbosa's Innocence campaign. It proved to be a three year project. She, and her husband Joe, were convicted in 1984 for sexually assaulting their two children. Joe was later released from prison and exonerated when both children recanted their testimony years later and indicated they had been forced to provide false testimony by their natural father, Ms. Barbosa's estranged husband. He had become embittered in a lengthy and contentious divorce.

Ms. Barbosa appeared before Jefferson County Judge Cass in January 2005. After hearing the evidence he recommended her conviction be overturned. That decision was forwarded to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals for its review and subsequent concurrence. An article summarizing the case was published in "Legal".

MASS Outreach...



Photos by Joe Rodriguez

The Katrina Project



MASS is currently offering 170 of the 350 Katrina victims enrolled the following services:

Under the direction of Ms. Brown's leadership, MASS began **immediately** helping Hurricane Katrina Evacuees, bypassing FEMA "red tape" and oftentimes senseless policy for how to distribute housing and funding allowances. Moreover, MASS continues to monitor and serve Katrina victims. It is MASS policy to continue to be a resource for **all** MASS clients.

MASS, Inc. Clients Enjoy The Holiday Season.

MASS, Inc. along with the Dallas Black Firefighters Assoc. play Santa to over 150 Mass, Inc. clients and their families.



Dallas, TX - Joyce Ann Brown, CEO/Founder Mothers (Fathers) for the Advancement of Social Systems, Inc. (MASS), staff and MASS children enjoy activities.

MASS Christmas Event for Youth of Incarcerated Caregivers (12/16/2006)

Each year MASS provides a Christmas event for Youth of Incarcerated Caregivers and other disadvantaged children. The event has enjoyed extraordinary growth (600 to 750 people annually). This year *CSI: New York*, actor/author **Hill Harper** (*Letters To A Young Brother MANifest Your Destiny*) participated via video and actor **Rockman Dunbar**, *Prison Break* and *Showtime*, *Soul Food* was the Keynote Speaker. MASS provided gifts for 250 children, and in keeping with tradition, honored the youth who continues to academically excel.



L to R: Joyce Ann Brown, Hill Harper (*CSI: NY*) and Judge Victor Landers

MASS, Inc. Clients Enjoy The Thanksgiving Holiday. Happy Grandmother receiving gift basket for grandchildren.

