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### ON THE MOVE WITH ATLANTA'S WOMEN OF VISION

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*"I don't want a color blind society, I want a society that sees my black skin and my nappy hair and loves it,"* stated The Honorable Leah Ward Sears, Chief Justice Supreme Court of Georgia, as she commented on her vision for the future, during the Atlanta Business League's 11th Annual "Women of Vision" Breakfast that featured Atlanta's top "100 Black Women of Influence" and the "Women's Hall of Fame" Inductees.



**Juanita Abernathy & Carla Morrison**

The *"Women of Vision"* Breakfast was held at the Omni Hotel, where there were over 200 guests that included politicians, religious and business leaders. The event celebrated black women in the metro Atlanta community who have reached senior level positions within their profession, are leading entrepreneurs in their industry or have attained the ability to influence large public bodies politically and in government.

The Atlanta Business League inducts three deserving women into the Women's Hall of Fame, created in 2000, to recognize African-American female pioneers who have paved the way for others to follow in their respective arenas. Civil Rights Activist Juanita Jones Abernathy; Evern Cooper Epps, President of the UPS Foundation & VP of Corporate Relations and The Honorable Leah Ward Sears, Chief Justice Supreme Court of Georgia, were the three "Women Hall of Fame" inductees for 2006.



**Juanita Abernathy, Evern Cooper Epps &  
The Honorable Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears**

Sears, the 1st African American Woman to hold the position of Chief Justice Supreme Court, said it is important to bring diversity into the judicial system and is actively working towards

making it a reality. In her position, Sears hopes to inspire young black women to get involved in the judicial system as well as be comfortable in their skin. "Black women, like the people I'm leading I want them to see me be myself. Myself being black," says Sears, also making reference to her natural hairstyles. "I like the natural hair. I think it says something about how good I feel being an African American. So you will probably always see me in some variation of a natural hairstyle."

Growing up in Savannah, Georgia during the mid-fifties, Sears said there were no black women judges and hardly any black women lawyers. "So it wasn't even a possibility in my mind," to become the highest ranking, member in the Georgia judicial system. Ms. Abernathy said, the Civil Rights Movement opened doors that no one had walked through, laying the foundation for women and men of all races. Sears agrees, "without that foundation I wouldn't be standing here. I stand upon their shoulders. And that includes the shoulders of somebody like Juanita Abernathy."

Ms. Juanita Jones Abernathy, who is an original member of the Civil Rights Movement not only worked tirelessly with the movement by marching, typing and distributing leaflets regarding the bus boycotts, Ms. Abernathy also traveled through-out the United States teaching young women how to establish their own businesses through Mary Kay Cosmetics. Ms. Abernathy got involved with Mary Kay Cosmetics in 1973, becoming the 2nd person to receive a Cadillac through the company, which is a major accomplishment in the Mary Kay Cosmetics industry. "I traveled all over America and taught at every seminar that Mary Kay had until 1993, and I'm proud to stand here today as a woman who has influenced businesswomen all over this country," said Abernathy.

Evern Cooper Epps, gives credit to Coretta Scott King, Ms. Abernathy and other civil rights leaders for laying the pathway "for all of us to not lower our level of expectance and to demand more." Epps said in her position as President of UPS Foundation, everyday is an opportunity to help shape someone's life. "And I think that's what's been done for me." She also said she looks at the previous honorees that have been inducted into the hall of fame and they led the path. "So with that comes responsibility and I think we have a responsibility to the next set of leadership to raise the bar."

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