



**Quad County
Urban League**

***Empowering Communities.
Changing Lives.***

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Quad County Affiliate Highlighted During Kick-off of National Urban League Conference in Chicago

CHICAGO – National Urban League President, Marc Morial, highlighted the Quad County Urban League's Urban Youth Empowerment program (UYEP) and the success story of a recent program graduate during his keynote address to kick-off the Urban League's annual conference.

"Every class has its stars," Morial said, "Tonight I want to introduce you to Gelisa Garner; Gelisa is an example of an Urban League affiliate in action.

Ms. Garner enrolled in the UYEP in 2007, looking to earn her GED and begin a career in the medical field. Just three months into the program, Ms. Garner completed the educational instruction, transitioned an internship into a full-time job opportunity, and began to apply to community colleges. Ms. Garner is currently a manager of a women's retail store and this fall will begin studying for her Medical Assistant certification at Everest College.

Along with the Quad County Urban League, Mr. Morial, recognized the Chicago and NW Indiana affiliates for the difference they too are making in the lives and communities they reach.

The Chicago affiliate hosted the 2009 National Urban League Conference at McCormick Place, July 29 through August 1.

"Thirty years is the last time we held our conference in the city of Chicago," Morial told the hundreds gathered for the State of the Urban League keynote address at Apostolic Church of God in Chicago. "It's fitting that we come here this week, to lay out a road map, if you will, for a 21st century path to power, not only for African Americans, but for every single person in this nation who believes in and is willing to work hard for the fulfillment of the American dream."

Sponsored by the Centene Corporation and McDonald's, the National Urban League conference featured power-packed workshops led by some of the most dynamic thought leaders in the country, including U.S. Vice President Joe Biden. Issues and topics addressed during the week included surviving the housing crisis, becoming a successful entrepreneur, taking advantage of the new "green" economy, strengthening America's workforce, the progress of diversity in corporate America, the Afro-Latino experience, the next generation of African-American leadership and why it's important for African-Americans to mobilize for the 2010 Census.

Noted speakers and panelists who participated in the conference include: CNN's Soledad O'Brien; Earvin "Magic" Johnson; U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan; Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley; Bank of America President Kenneth Lewis; NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Jealous; the Rev. Jesse Jackson; Chris Gardner, noted businessman and author of

the *Pursuit of Happyness*; BET's Jeff Johnson; CNBC's Sharon Epperson; EPA Administrator Lisa Perez; Black Enterprises' Ed Gordon, Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan; HGTV's Kim Myles, and many others. Several celebrities also attended the conference including Tracee Ellis Ross, from the hit television program *Girlfriends*, Oscar nominee Terrance Howard, Tyra Banks, hip-hop artist Yung Joc and EnVogue who gave an electrifying performance during the benefit concert.

In 2010 the National Urban League will celebrate its 100th anniversary. As this year's conference focused on the "Path to Power," the Centennial Empowerment Plan lays out the organization's path to the future. Outlined by Morial during his keynote address, the plan includes four main objectives. By 2025 every American child is ready for college, work and life, every American has access to a decent job with a living wage, every American is free from barriers to safe, decent, affordable and energy efficient housing...on fair terms and every American has access to quality and affordable health care.

About Quad County Urban League

The Quad County Urban League is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, social service agency, founded in 1975 to address academic achievement, job placement and training, equal access to employment, housing, and cultural enrichment for low-income displaced citizens. QCUL advocates for social and economic growth in diverse communities and services the areas of DuPage, Kane, Kendall, and Will Counties. Visit www.qcul.org.

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