

## 2009 Bill of Rights Luncheon

### Martina N. Davis-Correia

*Georgia Civil Liberties Award*



The National Black Leadership Initiative on Cancer Executive Director, Savannah Coalition  
National Steering Committee Chair, AIUSA's Program to Abolish the Death Penalty  
State Death Penalty Abolition Coordinator for Georgia

Martina joined the United States Army in 1985 where she graduated from the U.S Army Combat Medical Specialist School at Fort Sam Houston, Texas in the top 2% of her class, following with a Bachelors and Masters Degree in Nursing from Baylor University in Texas. Following various military schools and trainings from around the country, Martina attended many military specialty schools to include Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Warfare and Medicine and various leadership academies. During her thirteen years of active military duty and eight years as an Army Reservist, Martina is also a veteran of the Desert Shield/Desert Storm Gulf War Era and has served in Haiti, Germany, Costa Rica, Belgium, Somalia, Bolivia and various other bases around the United States including Ft. Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield. Post active duty, Martina worked in Savannah in various medical capacities but is presently disabled to breast cancer.

#### **Human Rights Work**

During Martina's extensive traveling and experience she began to work on Human Rights Issues and therefore began to work on Juvenile Issues, Education, Racial Injustice, Health Disparities and other issues that affect African-Americans; especially Black Males in the United States. Martina works to

expose the atmospheres that influence criminal behavior, such as poverty, illiteracy, drug addiction, mental illness, cultural understanding and racism.

Martina holds a national volunteer position with the largest section of the worlds largest International Human Rights Organization, Amnesty International USA. Martina is the Chair of Amnesty International USA's (AIUSA), Program to Abolish the Death Penalty's (PADP) National Steering Committee ((NSC). Martina became involved in this issue due to racial and economic bias in its application, the affects of Black male juveniles, the incarcerated innocent, and the mentally ill. Martina is a member of AIUSA's National Steering Committee for the National Weekend of Faith in Action (NWFA), religious organizing against the death penalty. Martina also holds a state position as the State Death Penalty Abolitionist Coordinator (SDPAC) for the State of Georgia. Martina is a member of the Board of Directors for Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (GFADP). She is an active member of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (NCADP), board member of the Campaign to End the Death Penalty, member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and works closely with Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation and Murder Victim Families for Human Rights (MVFR and MVFRHR). From 1999 to 2005 Martina was the Chair of Georgia CURE (Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants) a state-wide component of National CURE which focuses on Excessive Sentencing, Mental Illness, Recidivism, Prisoner Abuse, Incarcerated Veterans, the Death Penalty and Prisoner Family Support.

Martina is a steering committee and organizing member of Left Behind, a Black Male Initiative and grassroots organization in Savannah, Georgia that fights against racial discrimination, unfair punishment and quality education for young black males in the public school system. Martina spends time volunteering throughout the city and in the public school system offering ways to improve education, reduce crime and racism within the City of Savannah. Martina coaches basketball and baseball in the Savannah area with the YMCA and serves as a mentor to young athletes. Martina is a member of the Interracial Interfaith Community of Savannah and serves on the Civil Rights Planning Committee in Savannah.

### **Cancer Experience**

Martina is a 6.5 year Stage IV Mestatic Breast Cancer Survivor, diagnosed at age 33. Since then Martina has began to advocate in the healthcare system and the community about chronic disease prevention in underserved communities. Martina is the Executive Officer of the National Black Leadership Initiative on Cancer, Savannah Coalition, Inc. (NBLIC). NBLIC is a community networks program of the National Cancer Institute that focuses on prevention, education and cultural barriers to eradicate cancer in communities of color especially the African-American and other underserved communities. She is the Chair of the American Cancer Society's (ACS) Community Action Team (CAT) that works with local and state elected officials to advocate for and fund cancer programs. Martina is a Public Relations Officer and Co-President for Sisters Network of Southeast Georgia, Inc., an African-American Breast Cancer Survivor Organization and has participated in national, state and local legislative lobby days for the National Breast Cancer Coalition, the Georgia Breast Cancer Coalition Fund and the American Cancer Society for the past 6 years. Martina serves as Team Leader for the National Breast Cancer Coalition

Fund in Washington, D.C. Martina does all this while being totally disabled due to continuous cancer prevention treatments.

**Martina is a graduate of all 3 Project Leads and serves on the Department of Defense (DOD) Breast Cancer Peer Review and the California Breast Cancer Peer Review Panels. Martina spends time now talking about cancer health disparities in Amnesty International USA's Stop Violence Against Women Campaign, citing economic, racial, gender and age disparities in diagnosis and treatments.**

Martina has traveled extensively nationally and internationally speaking about human rights and the effects of socio-economic disparities.

In October 2007, Martina was presented (Wo)Men Who Get It Right Award by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and singer Cheryl Crowe at the National Breast Cancer Coalition New York Gala.