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## **Life Comes Full Circle In Rural SC Community When Marian Wright Edelman Library Opens**

*Landmark Library Pays Tribute to America's Foremost Children's Advocate*

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BENNETTSVILLE, SC – A moving story that began more than six decades ago is about to have a very happy ending. On Sunday, March 21, 2010, supporters, colleagues, friends and family of Marian Wright Edelman will gather in Bennettsville, South Carolina. Some will travel only a few miles down a country road. Others - from all across the nation - will have a much longer journey. They are coming together in this little, rural town to honor Edelman, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund (CDF) an organization - which through her vision and guidance - has long been recognized as the most powerful and eloquent voice speaking on behalf of the nation's children. On that day, The Marian Wright Edelman Public Library of Marlboro County will open its doors.

Even as a little girl, Marian Wright Edelman dearly loved to read – a value promoted by her parents. But, growing up in Bennettsville, during the dark and difficult days of segregation, she was not welcome in the local library. Now, life has come full circle for that little girl. Marlboro County is about to celebrate the opening of a critically-needed,

state-of-the-art public library in this deeply impoverished region of South Carolina; and this visionary community's inspired choice to name it *The Marian Wright Edelman Public Library* recognizes the life and work of their native daughter. And, to these citizens, it is significant that the sign at the entrance reads, "WELCOME TO EVERYONE".

Marian Wright Edelman cannot contain her joy when she speaks about the library. "It is a beautiful, welcoming, place, filled with light. It will reach out its arms to the children of this community. The books and music and state-of-the-art technology will make it a true learning center for everyone...Marlboro County's gateway to the world. The fact that the people in the place where I was born and grew up with have honored me in this way means more to me than I can possibly say."

Her sentiments about the library were echoed by the Chair of the Marlboro County Library Board. "Our dream is - at long last - about to become a reality," said Patricia Henegan. She went on to say, "it's been more than 10 long years filled with inspiring moments and, I have to admit, a few discouraging set-backs. But, we never stopped dreaming and we were determined not to give up hope. And now we have this wonderful library that will have an enormous impact on the lives of our citizens - particularly our young people. It lifts my spirits to see it standing there."

Retired Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Bank of America, Hugh McColl, Jr., himself a Bennettsville, South Carolina native, served as Honorary Chairman of the Library campaign. "Marian Wright Edelman is a remarkable woman...a shining example of how one person can truly make a difference," McColl said. "Through her untiring leadership at the Children's Defense Fund, she has given a voice to the children of America. The Marian Wright Edelman Public Library will stand as an enduring tribute to her and a symbol of community progress in the hometown we share," he added.

The library is located at 203 Fayetteville Avenue, Bennettsville, SC. Event: Sunday, March 21, 2010. 2:00 - 5:00 PM. For further information about the library and the opening day festivities or to make on-line contributions for the library's future programs and services, please visit the web site at: [www.marianwrightedelmanlibrary.org](http://www.marianwrightedelmanlibrary.org).

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