



**Mecklenburg Ministries**  
*From Common Ground to Higher Ground*

## **25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Legacy Award Recipient**

### **Dianne English**

Since May 1997, Dianne English has served as the executive director of the Community Building Initiative (CBI) whose mission is to achieve inclusion and equity in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. This is also Dianne's personal mission. Through CBI Dianne has guided the launch of leadership programs such as the Leadership Development Initiative (LDI) and Leaders Under 40 and has partnered with Mecklenburg Ministries and the Community Relations Committee to offer "Can We Talk" Community Conversations on significant social issues.

From 1991 to 1997, Dianne served as executive director of Mecklenburg Ministries. During her tenure, Mecklenburg Ministries launched BridgeBuilders to promote interfaith and interracial relationships, and, to build racial and ethnic understanding, Mecklenburg Ministries created a Race Relations Task Force and resource library in 1991, InnerChange in 1992 and Youth Breaking Barriers in 1994. Under Dianne's direction, Mecklenburg Ministries also co-sponsored the Emergency Winter Shelter and formed a Violence Prevention Task Force.

Dianne has served as a board member for numerous civic and nonprofit organizations, which currently include Florence Crittenton Services, the Center for International Understanding and the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce.

Willie Ratchford of the Community Relations Committee wrote, "Dianne has been a friend and a colleague on whom I could depend for over 20 years. She is a person of integrity who feels an obligation to reach out and assist her fellow men and women through her many talents and gifts."

Steve Hockfield, former board member and partner of Erdman and Hockfield, LLP wrote, "I have only two heroes – they are Martin Luther King and Dianne English. Our community would not be the place it is today but for Dianne's ongoing efforts over the years in addressing issues of faith and race relations. Dianne's tireless energy has created an environment that allows us to talk with and to listen to each other."

Leon Miller added, "Dianne is an exemplary servant who is unalterably committed to advocacy for equity, diversity, and justice for 'the least of these.'"

Bishop Claude Alexander concluded, "Dianne is a dear friend and the godmother of our daughter Carsyn. She is a rare blend of integrity, authenticity, curiosity, and spirituality that is manifested in a commitment and pursuit of access, equity, and inclusion for everyone."