

## [Local Hero: Areva Martin](#)



Areva Martin

"If you surround yourself with the right people, there is hope; you become that amazing advocate that your children will need."

Areva Martin is a nationally recognized leader in the realm of law as well as the realm of advocacy for children with developmental disabilities. Through concerted, grassroots outreach programs and legal initiatives, her organization's efforts have evinced significant gains in the quality of diagnosis and treatment options available to the families of thousands of special needs children in her South Los Angeles community.

Areva graduated with honors from both Chicago University and Harvard Law School. She co-founded and continues to manage Martin & Martin, LLP, which is recognized as one of the premier African-American, female-owned firms in LA. Under Areva's leadership, the firm has developed a multidisciplinary civil practice, which serves some of the nation's top corporations, non-profit organizations, governmental entities and net-worth individuals.

Areva's greatest philanthropic contribution began when her youngest son was diagnosed with autism. She endured many struggles and tribulations in finding adequate treatment for her son, and these struggles served as the catalyst for the formation of the "Special Needs Network, Inc." SNN is a non-profit launched specifically to support families with special needs children. Under Areva's leadership the organization has provided advocacy training and resources to more than 10,000 families in South Los Angeles and has received commendations from congress persons, mayors, county supervisors and the city's top leaders. Areva also staunchly believes in pro bono work; she founded "Advocates for All," a roaming legal clinic that provides free legal advice and referrals to low-income residents of Los Angeles.

Due in large part to her philanthropic achievements and legal acumen, Areva is also a nationally recognized author and frequent radio and television guest. She has appeared as an authority on topics ranging from special needs advocacy to education, workplace and women's issues on programs such as Fox News, NPR, and Court TV. She has also contributed to the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Redbook*, and *Heart and Soul* magazine. Areva is also a legal analyst for the [Dr. Phil Show](#).

In 2010, Areva will oversee SNN's coordination and partnership with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Hospital opening in South Los Angeles. Through this partnership, Areva aspires to foster the funding and creation of a new, state-of-the-art developmental disability center that will provide even greater access to diagnosis and treatment for families in her community. Her second book, *The Everyday Advocate*, is also scheduled for release by Penguin Books in early 2010, as well.