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## **“Jobs Architect” Brenda Palms Barber Comes to Metro State as the 2012 Rachel B. Noel Visiting Professor**

*“Hope for the Future Noel Awards” Will Be Given to Denver Mayor Michael Hancock, Tuskegee Airman Lt. Col. James Harvey III and Little Rock Nine member Carlotta Walls LaNier*

FEBRUARY 7, 2012 – Denver – The legacy of one of Denver’s civil rights pioneers continues from **February 13 through 15, 2012**, when [Metropolitan State College of Denver](#) brings [Brenda Palms Barber](#) to the Auraria Campus as its 2012 **Rachel B. Noel Distinguished Visiting Professor**.

Jobs, jobs, jobs is the daily theme throughout the country and here in Denver. Ms. Palms Barber, CEO of the Chicago-area nonprofit North Lawndale Employment Network (NLEN), was chosen Visiting Professor based on her on-going commitment to workforce development, job transition programs and social architecture in low-income neighborhoods – creating employment, career paths and new opportunities for many of the area’s disadvantaged residents.

In doing so, she helped NLEN earn one of the first "Creative and Effective Institutions Awards" from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation in 2006.

The highlight of the three-day Noel Visiting Professorship program is the **February 13 “Choosing to Make a Difference” Community Celebration**, at which Professor Palms Barber will give a public address. This special evening will include presentation of the **Hope for the Future Noel Awards to Denver Mayor Michael Hancock, Tuskegee airman Lt. Col. James Harvey III and Little Rock Nine member Carlotta Walls LaNier**.

In addition to the community celebration, [Ms. Palms Barber will be giving her keynote address](#) to the Metro State student body (February 14 from 12:30 to 1:45 p.m.), lecturing at Metro State classes (all three days) and speaking with students at the Rachel B. Noel Middle School (February 14) and Fairview Elementary School (February 15).

[About Rachel B. Noel](#) (pronounced Noll)

In 1965, Rachel Noel became the **first African American elected to the Denver Public School Board** and the **first African American woman to hold elected office in Colorado**.

In 1968, she presented the DPS board with the **Noel Resolution, which asked the superintendent to develop a plan to integrate Denver's public schools**. Under a cloud of threats to Noel and her family, the resolution passed in 1970.

**The Rachel B. Noel Distinguished Visiting Professorship was established in 1981** to foster multiculturalism, diversity and academic excellence at Metropolitan State College of Denver. The professorship brings renowned scholars and artists of distinction to Metro State to conduct classes, seminars, performances and lectures for students, faculty and the larger Denver community.

**Details - “Choosing to Make a Difference” Community Celebration  
Monday, February 13, 2012**

VIP/Media Reception 6-7 p.m. Program 7-9 p.m.  
Shorter Community African Methodist Episcopal Church  
3100 Richard Allen Court (Colorado and Martin Luther King Boulevards)

**The program features a keynote address from social entrepreneur Brenda Palms Barber and bestows the Hope for the Future Noel Awards on these distinguished individuals:**

**Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock** is an inspiration to many, having overcome adversity and tragedy as a youngster to reach his election as mayor in June of 2011.

Passionate about public service, Hancock was the youngest CEO of an Urban League chapter anywhere in the United States. He was elected to the Denver City Council in 2003 and served two terms as council president.

**Lt. Col. James Harvey III** is one of the famed [Tuskegee Airmen](#). He was the military's first African American jet fighter pilot to fly missions over Korean airspace.

The Tuskegee Airmen had such great success flying missions during WW II that it is generally believed President Harry Truman made his decision to desegregate the military based on their brave service.

**Carlotta Walls LaNier**, the youngest of the [Little Rock Nine](#) and the first black woman to graduate from Little Rock (Arkansas) Central High School, wrote “Mighty Long Way: My Journey to Justice at Little Rock Central High School.”

In 1999, Ms. LaNier and the other members of the LRN were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal. She was inducted into the Colorado Women's Hall of Fame in 2004.

**Details - Prof. Palms Barber’s Keynote Address to Metro State Students  
Tuesday February 14 from 12:30 to 1:45 p.m.**

Tivoli Turnhall Student Center on the Auraria Campus  
Media interviews and photos at 1:45

**About Metropolitan State College of Denver**

With nearly 24,000 students, Metro State is Colorado’s leader in educating undergraduate Coloradans, and enrolls the highest number of students of color among the state’s four-year colleges. The College now offers master’s degrees in accounting, teaching and social work. It boasts 70,500 alumni, the bulk of whom remain in Colorado after graduation.