

## ARLENE BARRON TO RECEIVE NATIONAL AWARD

### *JCCA 2010 FLORENCE G. HELLER PROFESSIONAL AWARD*

Arlene Barron, Executive Director of the New Orleans JCC, has been selected by the Jewish Community Center Association in New York to be the recipient of the 2010 Florence G. Heller Professional Award. This is a national award that recognizes distinguished professional service within JCC Association's fields of work. This award will be presented to Arlene in early May at the JCC Association Biennial Convention in Atlanta, Georgia.

The Florence G. Heller Professional Award was established in 1968 by the Board of Directors of the JCC Association (continental umbrella organization for the Jewish Community Center Movement which includes more than 350 JCCs and YM-YWHAs) to honor the memory of its president and beloved leader, Mrs. Florence G. Heller. This award is presented to an outstanding JCC professional every two years at the Biennial Convention and through the years, only two other women have received this prestigious award.

Arlene began her professional career at the New Orleans JCC in 1981. She continued to climb the JCC ladder serving as the Older Adult Director, Development Director, and Assistant Director. In October, 2000, Barron succeeded Ann Eisen as the JCC Executive Director, a position she has held for the past 10 years. As a dedicated communal professional and a superb administrator, Arlene's experience has brought a standard of excellence to practices across all departments. A believer in continuing education, Arlene has been committed to providing opportunities for her staff's professional growth. For nearly 30 years at the New Orleans JCC, she has mentored numerous JCC staff who have moved on to other Centers, bringing with them a strong work ethic and commitment to the JCC movement.

In addition to her role as Executive Director, Arlene is currently a member of the Board of Directors of the Jewish Community Center Association and served as chairwoman of the Executive Director's Conference for large/intermediate JCC's this past January in Washington, D.C. She has also held the office of President of the Southern Region Association of Jewish Center Professionals and served on the national planning committee of the Association of Jewish Professional's Conference.

Arlene is a member of the Council of United Way Agencies and had served on the Executive Committee of this organization in the greater New Orleans area, recently serving as treasurer. Arlene received the JCC Association of Jewish Communal Professional's Tikkun Olam award in 2005. In 2007, the Jewish Endowment Foundation of Greater New Orleans awarded Arlene with the Helen A. Mervis Outstanding Jewish Community Professional Award.

As Executive Director, Arlene has guided the JCC magnificently through various capital improvements, renovations, fund development, policy changes, and program enhancements. Unfortunately her greatest professional challenge was in August 2005, just 45 days before the JCC was to celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, when Hurricane Katrina devastated the city, dispersing the population-including

9500 -10,000 Jews-and left thousands homeless. Arlene quickly realized that for the JCC, the Jewish journey that began in 1855 was now at great risk. While many sat back in shock and disbelief, Arlene Barron put aside her extensive personal losses and began the process of saving the city's Jewish Community Center. Her master reconstruction plan was both well formed and inventive, beginning with expertly negotiating a contract with FEMA to use the JCC building as their headquarters for distributing aid to the entire metropolitan area. By serving this broader population, in addition to the Jewish community, Arlene's commitment to Tikkun Olam strengthened the name and reputation of the JCC.

After the Center's recovery began, Arlene realized the importance of developing a Disaster Recovery Plan, which she created and has subsequently shared with many of her JCC colleagues from around the country. In addition, she developed a strategic plan that she used as a template to bring prosperity and normalcy back to the Center. Today, under Arlene's direction, the JCC experiences record high enrollment in the nursery school, day camps and fitness center memberships. This past summer, the Center had the pleasure and honor of hosting the 2009 JCC Maccabi ArtsFest - a symbol that through Arlene's leadership the New Orleans JCC is back, strong and ready to continue to create Jewish journeys for generations to come.

Mazel Tov Arlene on this distinguished award!