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“Attorney of the Day” Project Expanded; Lane Powell PC Offers to Help

January 5, 2006. Anchorage, Alaska. With recent news of more funding cuts and a high demand for civil legal services for low-income persons, Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC) and its Volunteer Attorney Support pro bono program have partnered with more local law firms and private practitioners to enhance its client services during 2006.

ALSC and Dorsey & Whitney initiated a pilot project in 2004 called the “Attorney of the Day,” a project in which a private attorney assists a financially-eligible ALSC client through a one-time screening and consultation. “The meeting provides the applicants with the opportunity to tell their story to someone who cares about their predicament and wants to help. Oftentimes the applicant is simply overwhelmed by their circumstances and the intricacies of the legal system and state and federal bureaucracies,” said John Treptow from Dorsey & Whitney. In one year, over 80 low-income persons benefited from this partnership.

The members of the law firm Lane Powell PC have stepped up to the challenge and have announced that they will partner with ALSC and Dorsey & Whitney during 2006 to assist with the “Attorney of the Day” project. ALSC Executive Director Andy Harrington stated “We're very appreciative of the volunteer efforts of those lawyers volunteering to be ‘attorney of the day’ – it has become a vital component of what we can do for Alaskans and has enabled us to reach out to many people who otherwise would be completely unserved. The generosity of these volunteers isn't limited to this time of year; their gift is helping low-income Alaskans year round.” Members of Lane Powell PC also announced that they will help ALSC clients with simple adoptions.

Anchorage is not the only city in which partnerships have been formed. In Fairbanks, a local law firm will be teaching new clinics on living wills and healthcare directives. Partnerships with two law firms in Juneau, Faulkner Banfield and Baxter Bruce & Sullivan, have benefited many low-income persons in southeast Alaska. More recently and through help from Krista Scully, Pro Bono Director of the Alaska Bar Association, ALSC has formed a new partnership in Juneau with the law firm of Simpson, Tillinghast & Sorensen. The law firm has generously agreed to handle a limited yet constant flow of pro bono referrals during this year, involving living wills, trusts, and/or health care directives. Persons seeking to benefit from these services should apply through the Juneau office of ALSC.

Alaska Legal Services Corporation is a charitable organization established in 1966 to provide free civil legal assistance to low-income Alaskans. The Volunteer Attorney Support pro bono program has been recruiting volunteer attorneys to help low-income Alaskans for over two decades through the generosity of members of the Alaska Bar Association.

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