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Lawyers' Committee to Honor Bay Area Attorneys and Legal Professionals for Efforts to Advance Civil Rights

SAN FRANCISCO, CA -- Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area will honor nine volunteer attorneys and legal professionals Wednesday for their outstanding contribution to civil rights advocacy. The volunteers will be recognized at the 24th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Awards Luncheon, to be held on **Wednesday, January 19** at the **Marriott Marquis in San Francisco**.

"Dr. King would be proud to know that there still are people carrying on his dream by contributing their time and exceptional skills toward enhancing the civil rights of underserved communities," said Lawyers' Committee Executive Director Lateefah Simon.

Guest speakers include California Supreme Court Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye, Attorney General Kamala Harris, and Melinda Haag, U.S. Attorney for the Northern California District, who will deliver the keynote speech.

The luncheon has long been recognized as the premiere forum for Bay Area legal professionals to pay tribute to those who have provided exceptional legal services to the underserved. Last year's event attracted more than 700 attendees from the legal community. This year's lead sponsors include Audet & Partners LLP, Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP, Visa, Inc., and Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati Foundation.

Brett White, a partner at Cooley Godward Kronish LLP, will be awarded the **James T. Caleshu Award**, which recognizes an attorney who has made extraordinary *pro bono* contribution to Lawyers' Committee's Legal Services for Entrepreneurs Program. Mr. White has helped dozens of low-income entrepreneurs establish small businesses, and has been a

champion of the program within Cooley, where he serves on the firm's Pro Bono Committee.

Nancy Harris and **Tracey Lesetar**, both attorneys at Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe; **Ruth Kwon**, an Assistant U.S. Attorney and former Orrick attorney; **Rocio Alejandra Avila**, director of legal services and litigation at La Raza Centro Legal's Worker's Rights Program; and **Avantika Rao**, a writer and human rights activist, will receive the **Jack W. Londen Award**. The award recognizes the exemplary efforts of a *pro bono* team in the area of impact litigation, protecting and advancing the civil rights of marginalized communities. The group successfully obtained an award of more than \$600,000 on behalf, Ms. Zoraida Peña-Canal, a Peruvian domestic worker who was trafficked and enslaved by a family in Walnut Creek.

Adam Sanders, who has worked as a juvenile probation officer in San Benito County for nine years, will receive the **Anthony F. Logan Award**, which recognizes the efforts of a legal assistant, secretary or other non-attorney volunteer who has made outstanding contribution to public interest law through volunteer work with the Lawyers' Committee. In early 2008, Mr. Sanders referred two indigenous children to the Lawyers' Committee, and has since then continued to work as a volunteer with the Lawyers' Committee and the legal teams that represent indigenous clients.

Simona Agnolucci will receive the **Father Cuchulain Moriarity Award**, given every year to an attorney who has made an extraordinary *pro bono* contribution to the Lawyers' Committee's Asylum Project. Ms. Agnolucci is an associate at Howard, Rice, Nemerovski, Canady, Falk & Rabkin. In the past two years, Ms. Agnolucci has worked on several cases through the Lawyers' Committee's Asylum Program, and has secured asylum for nine individuals through the program.

Thomas V. Loran III will receive the **Robert G. Sproul, Jr. Award**, which honors an attorney who has demonstrated exemplary leadership within the *pro bono* legal community –demonstrated by both commitment to providing *pro bono* services, and unyielding dedication to advocating within the private bar for continued *pro bono* representation of under-represented groups. Mr. Loran is a partner at Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP. He has litigated at both the trial and appellate levels in state and in federal court, handling numerous *pro bono* cases involving civil rights, political asylum, and defense of both residential evictions and consumer debt collection actions.

About the Lawyers' Committee:

For more than 40 years, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area has worked to advance, protect and promote the legal rights of communities of color,

immigrants and refugees -- with a specific focus on low-income communities and a long-standing commitment to African Americans. Lawyers' Committee staff, working with hundreds of *pro bono* attorneys, provides free legal assistance and representation to individuals on civil legal matters through direct services, impact litigation and policy advocacy. For more information, visit www.lccr.com.