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Supreme Judicial Court Recognizes Maine Attorneys and Law Students For 2016 Free Legal Aid to Elderly and Others in Need

October 18, 2016, Portland, Maine –For Immediate Release.

In honor of National Pro Bono Week, October 23-29, 2016, Chief Justice Leigh I. Saufley today announced that the Maine Supreme Judicial Court will honor Maine lawyers who have reported their contributions of at least 50 hours of legal assistance to low income and elderly Maine people. This recognition will take place in ceremonies across the state in the coming weeks. This year, the Court will recognize 107 lawyers and 4 law students for donating 11,283 hours of legal work to Mainers in need of civil legal assistance. These legal services have an estimated market value of more than \$1,600,000.

In thanking these lawyers the Chief Justice said, “We are very proud of Maine lawyers. They recognize that lawyers have a special responsibility to help fulfill the promise of justice for all. The Supreme Judicial Court is grateful to all lawyers who are providing pro bono and low-cost legal services, and the Court is particularly appreciative of the Katahdin Counsel lawyers, who have truly led the way in providing pro bono services to their fellow Mainers. Katahdin Counsel lawyers have set a high standard in the legal community for donating their time and talents to help their fellow Mainers in need.”

“There is no constitutional right to a lawyer in most civil cases, yet the need is critical. There are many Maine people, including the elderly, the disabled, and veterans, who simply cannot afford a lawyer. They face challenging legal issues involving employment, housing, health, family matters, domestic violence, consumer credit and bankruptcy.”

Chief Justice Saufley went on to say, “ National Pro Bono Week is a time to recognize the public’s need for access to justice and the daily efforts of Maine lawyers who quietly, and without fanfare, provide help to people in need. We take this opportunity to highlight the profession’s responsibility to help improve access to legal services to the poor. The single, easiest way to do that is to accept cases from the Volunteer Lawyers’ Project. I urge all Maine lawyers to set a goal in 2017 to provide at least 50 hours of pro bono work in service to others. Working together, we must make justice for all a reality. Providing free legal services to those in need is the surest way to provide the help that will make a meaningful difference in the lives of Maine people.”

The list of this year’s honorees can be found at:

http://www.courts.maine.gov/citizen_help/attorneys/katahdin/kcrp_2015.html

Those in need of legal services can contact the Volunteer Lawyers Project at 1-800-442-4293.

The press is welcome to attend all events.

Katahdin Counsel 2016 Award ceremony schedules:

Houlton, Aroostook County Superior Courthouse, October 14, 2016, Noon, honoring Aroostook County lawyers, and hosted by Associate Supreme Judicial Court Justice Donald Alexander.

Bangor, Penobscot Judicial Center, October 28, 2016, 10:30 a.m. Hosted by Associate Supreme Judicial Court Justice Andrew Mead, honoring lawyers from Penobscot and Hancock Counties.

Alfred, York County Superior Court, October 28, 2016, 2:00 p.m. Hosted by Associate Supreme Judicial Court Justice Thomas E. Humphrey, honoring lawyers in York County.

Auburn, Androscoggin County Superior Court, October 28, 2016, 10:00 a.m. Hosted by Associate Supreme Judicial Court Justice Robert Clifford, honoring lawyers from Androscoggin and Oxford Counties.

Augusta, Capital Judicial Center, October 28, 2016, 2:00 p.m. Hosted by Associate Supreme Judicial Court Justice Jeffrey Hjelm, honoring Kennebec lawyers and law students.

Portland, Maine, Cumberland County Courthouse, October 25, 2016, 4:00 p.m. Hosted by Chief Justice Leigh Saufley and Associate Justice Andrew Mead, honoring Cumberland, Oxford, and Sagadahoc County lawyers and law students.

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