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CALIFORNIA DISABILITY RIGHTS ORGANIZATION, DISABILITY RIGHTS LEGAL CENTER, TO RECEIVE 2010 PAUL G. HEARNE AWARD FOR DISABILITY RIGHTS

WASHINGTON, D.C., May 19, 2010—The American Bar Association Commission on Mental and Physical Disability Law has selected the Disability Rights Legal Center (DRLC) of Los Angeles, California to receive the 2010 Paul G. Hearne Award for Disability Rights. The DRLC will receive the award at the Commission's annual reception at the ABA 2010 Annual Meeting on Monday, August 9 in San Francisco, CA. The event will begin at 6 P.M. at the Moscone Center West, 3rd Floor, room 3020.

Each year the ABA presents the **Paul G. Hearne Award for Disability Rights** to an individual who, or organization that, has performed exemplary service in furthering the rights, dignity and access to justice for some 54 million Americans with disabilities. The award is co-sponsored by the Starbucks Coffee Company.

For 35 years the **Disability Rights Legal Center** has advocated on behalf of people with disabilities, eliminating discrimination and other legal barriers that keep these individuals in poverty. This nonprofit legal services program, which is affiliated with



two law schools, achieves its mission through the following programs: Civil Rights Litigation; Cancer Legal Resource Center; Education Advocacy; Community Outreach; Options Counseling and Lawyer Referral Service; Pro Bono Program; and the Inland Empire Program. DRLC litigates in federal and state court to enforce various disability anti-discrimination laws, as well as educates and conducts outreach to the public on compliance with these laws. DRLC's recent efforts include class actions alleging failures to provide special education at Los Angeles County Jail and ensure that emergency preparedness plans for major emergencies in Los Angeles address the needs of people with disabilities. DRLC is co-counsel on a case that resulted in a preliminary injunction enjoining cuts to California's In Home Support Services program, which affects approximately 130,000 low income people with disabilities.

In the recent past, DRLC has been counsel on cases that have included a million dollar settlement with broad injunctive relief addressing systemic failure to provide reasonable accommodations and habitable living conditions for low income tenants with disabilities at the Alexandria Hotel in downtown Los Angeles, and a successfully settled class action on behalf of students with disabilities regarding systemic failure to provide accommodations and physical access on the California State University San Bernardino campus, resulting in \$11.7 million worth of improvements and an overhaul of the accommodations procedures for students.

Paul G. Hearne (1950-1998), for whom the award was named, was born with a connective tissue disorder that physically limited his growth and restricted his movement. Through tenacity, intelligence and initiative, he created opportunities for himself and others, and proved a leader for all people with disabilities. Hearne's life was marked by many pioneering endeavors in the legal and disability communities. He served as the director of Just One Break, Inc., the nation's first private job placement agency for people with disabilities; the National Council on Disability; the Dole Foundation for Employment of People with Disabilities; the International Center for the Disabled; the Very Special Arts International Fund; and the Osteogenesis Imperfecta Foundation.

- For more information on the Award, visit: <http://new.abanet.org/disability/Pages/Hearne.aspx>
- For more information on the reception for lawyers with disabilities, visit: <http://new.abanet.org/disability/Pages/Reception.aspx>

With nearly 400,000 members, the **American Bar Association** is the largest voluntary professional membership organization in the world. As the national voice of the legal profession, the ABA works to improve the administration of justice, promotes programs that assist lawyers and judges in their work, accredits law schools, provides continuing legal education, and works to build public understanding around the world of the importance of the rule of law.