

For Immediate Release
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Disability Rights Legal Center Wins ABA's Hearne Award for Disability Rights

Los Angeles – The Disability Rights Legal Center (DRLC) was honored with the Paul G. Hearne Award for Disability Rights, presented annually by the American Bar Association Commission on Mental and Physical Disability Law to an organization in recognition of outstanding work to further the rights of the disabled.

The DRLC, currently celebrating its 35th anniversary, is a non-profit advocacy center whose mission is to promote the rights of people with disabilities and the public awareness of those rights by providing legal and related services. The DRLC is currently litigating numerous high-impact cases affecting the rights of people with disabilities, including a class action addressing the failure to provide special education at Los Angeles County Jail, a class action addressing the failure to ensure that emergency preparedness plans for major emergencies in Los Angeles address the needs of people with disabilities, and a case addressing the failure to provide education to youth detained at Los Angeles County's largest detention camp, among many others. The DRLC is also currently co-counsel on a case addressing cuts to California's In-Home Supportive Services program, which resulted in a preliminary injunction stopping cuts to approximately 130,000 low-income people with disabilities.

In the recent past, the 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. The DRLC successfully settled a 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 in improvements and an overhaul of the accommodations procedures for students. And it successfully settled a class action resulting in provision of special education and mental health services to youth with disabilities in the San Bernardino Juvenile Halls.

DRLC is deeply rooted at Loyola Law School. The DRLC's headquarters are located on the school's downtown Los Angeles campus. DRLC staff attorneys serve as adjunct professors at the school, leading classes in topics related to disability rights law. And Loyola students are the primary participants in the DRLC's clinical programs, where they assist with client intake and the DRLC's impact litigation to accrue pro bono hours. The DRLC and Loyola jointly operate the Cancer Legal Resource Center, the nation's only dedicated center for cancer-related legal resources and referrals. Learn more about the DRLC at www.disabilityrightslegalcenter.org.

"This is an extraordinary acknowledgement of the DRLC's impact on disability rights for the last 35 years," said DRLC Executive Director Paula Pearlman. "The award was made possible by the DRLC's outstanding legal and support staff, law student externs, volunteers and its passionate board of directors. The Hearne Award validates our longstanding commitment to systemic change and to the elimination of discrimination against people with all types of disabilities."

The Hearne award is the namesake of an iconic activist who became a pioneer in the field of advancing the rights of persons with disabilities. Hearne's work included serving as director of the country's first private job placement service for people with disabilities. The ABA bestows the Hearne award each year on a person or group who carried on his vision and work. The award will be presented at the ABA's 2010 annual meeting.

About Loyola Law School Los Angeles

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