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PRESS RELEASE

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LOUISVILLE METRO PUBLIC DEFENDER'S OFFICE WINS THE 2003 CLARA SHORTRIDGE FOLTZ AWARD

WASHINGTON, DC, October 31, 2003 — The National Legal Aid & Defender Association (NLADA) is pleased to announce that the 2003 Clara Shortridge Foltz Award goes to the Louisville Metro Public Defender's Office in Louisville, Kentucky.

This prestigious national award is presented biennially to a public defender program or defense delivery system as a commendation for its outstanding achievement in the provision of public defense services. Co-sponsored by NLADA and the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Legal Aid and Indigent Defense, the award is named for the founder of the nation's public defender system. The selection committee found that, among many worthy nominations, the Louisville Metro Public Defender best met the following award criteria:

- the office exemplifies a best practice of public defense advocacy that can serve as an inspirational national model;
- it has measurably expanded or improved access to full and excellent criminal defense representation for those who cannot afford counsel; and
- it represents innovation worthy of continued development and replication by others.

In a letter nominating the Louisville Metro Public Defender's office, former ABA President L. Stanley Chauvin, Jr., of Louisville, states: "During my term as president of the

American Bar Association, I had the pleasure of observing, evaluating and interacting with many defender offices across the country. I know of no program or organization that better exemplifies the spirit and high standard of practice pioneered by the individual in whose name this important award is presented than the Louisville Metro Public Defender.

“Since its incorporation in 1971, the Louisville Metro Public Defender’s office has revolutionized criminal defense representation in this jurisdiction and led the way for the establishment and implementation of a full-time, statewide public defender system in Kentucky. Dubbed 'The Best Legal Minds Money Can't Buy' in a *Courier-Journal Magazine* article published in 1990 ... , the office operates a mixed caseload/vertical representation system in accordance with ABA standards and NLADA guidelines. Its record of achievement on behalf of indigent accused in the trial and appellate courts, both state and federal, is truly remarkable.”

The Louisville Metro Public Defender has a reputation among its peers as being the best. In the trial courts, the success of the office’s defender litigators is second to none in either the private or public sector. Its representation of juvenile clients has been singled out for praise by the ABA. Its TeamChild program has broken new ground in Kentucky with an innovative and proactive approach. TeamChild pairs civil attorneys with public defenders to holistically address the needs of youth in the juvenile justice system.

Similarly, the office's aggressive advocacy on behalf of respondents in involuntary hospitalization proceedings has changed practices and attitudes toward perhaps the most vulnerable clients in the court system. Staff attorneys in the defender's office are recognized as among the most expert in this area of the law and are regularly called upon to lead or participate in task forces and legislative efforts to improve the quality of justice for the mentally ill. Insofar as appellate advocacy is concerned, the office has been responsible for numerous favorable

changes in state and federal case law, including the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Batson v. Kentucky*.

In addition, the Louisville Metro Public Defender's office successfully challenged the use and expansion of video arraignments, and Chief Public Defender Dan Goyette convinced judicial and executive branch leaders to rethink and redesign new courts and corrections construction in Jefferson County so that all persons accused of crimes are assured of in-person, in-court, "live" arraignments. Currently, Jefferson County is the only one of the 120 counties in the state in which video arraignments are not used. Instead, the equipment originally purchased by the county for video arraignments is being installed at the public defender's office to allow for "24/7" video-conferencing capability between attorneys and inmates.

In seconding the nomination of the Louisville Metro Public Defender, Justice Martin E. Johnstone of the Kentucky Supreme Court remarked that "[T]hey have been instrumental in raising the bar for the effective representation of indigents accused of criminal offenses and bringing us closer to the promise of *Gideon*. Furthermore, their leadership in all facets of the bar and the justice system has resulted in progress and innovation that never would have occurred otherwise. I shudder to think how different and inferior our system would be had the Louisville-Jefferson County Public Defender Corporation not come into being in 1971."

Led by **Daniel T. Goyette** for the past 21 years, the Louisville Metro Public Defender office's staff includes 51 attorneys, nine investigators, five paralegals, two social workers, a mitigation specialist, two law clerks, 12 secretaries, eight data entry personnel and a comptroller. The workload and delivery system is organized into eight coordinated, collaborative divisions. Goyette's leadership team includes: **Leo G. Smith**, deputy chief public defender; **Peter L. Schuler**, chief of the Juvenile and Mental Health Division; **Frank W. Heft, Jr.**, chief appellate defender; **Ann Bailey Smith**, chief of Adult Trial Division I; **Donald J. Meier**, chief of Adult Trial Division II; **Jay Lambert**, chief of Adult Trial Division III; **Raymond M.**

Clooney, chief of the Capital Trial Division; **Patricia L. Echsner**, deputy chief of the Juvenile Trial Division; and **William E. Sharp**, deputy chief of the Adult Trial Division.

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The National Legal Aid & Defender Association (NLADA), founded in 1911, is the oldest and largest national, nonprofit membership organization devoting all of its resources to advocating equal access to justice for all Americans. NLADA champions effective legal assistance for people who cannot afford counsel, serves as a collective voice for both civil legal services and public defense services throughout the nation and provides a wide range of services and benefits to its individual and organizational members.