Governor Ted Kulongoski expresses support for Campaign for Equal Justice at Annual Lunch

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Governor Ted Kulongoski

 keynote speaker Governor Ted Kulongoski affirmed his personal support for the Campaign for Equal Justice at the Campaign’s Annual Luncheon in March.

Excerpts of Governor’s Speech:

The Campaign is more than a cause – it is a moral obligation. As officers of the court, we are duty bound to keep the courthouse doors open to everyone. This is especially true now – as Oregon’s faltering economy washes more and more families onto the shore of poverty and hardship.

Oregon lawyers cannot turn our economy around. That’s not your responsibility. But it is your responsibility – and mine – to help the Campaign for Equal Justice turn around the lives of people who need legal services but cannot afford them. Mary and I believe this very deeply. To us it is the essence of why one wants to be a lawyer. And we are both ready to make every active lawyer in Oregon a believer too.

...Over the last twelve years you not only raised $9 million dollars for Legal Aid, you raised the consciousness of lawyers across this state. Too many Oregon lawyers are still not contributing to the Campaign. But Oregon is ahead of every other state in building a partnership between the private bar and public advocates for the poor. For this, I thank not only the leadership of the Campaign, but all of Oregon’s Legal Aid attorneys.

The Campaign for Equal Justice is absolutely critical to Oregon’s future. It is the best insurance – really the only insurance – we have against the rule of law becoming a privilege for some instead of a right for all. ...As some of you may know, the Campaign has started an endowment fund and they are running what is essentially a capital campaign – a drive to raise a large sum of money that can be invested, with the interest and dividends being used to fund future Legal Aid services ... Today, I’m calling on donors to the Campaign for Equal Justice to double their most recent contribution, with half going to the Endowment. Mary and I will be the first to do this. And for the 7,500 active members of the bar who do not give to the annual campaign, I’m calling on them to make a $250 dollar annual contribution to the Campaign. This would raise almost $2 million and bring us much closer to fulfilling our responsibility - as lawyers and citizens - to the ideal of equal justice under law.

Oregon Lawyers Support Access to Justice

Governor Ted Kulongoski said it best, “the Campaign for Equal Justice is more than a cause - it is a moral obligation.” In his address to 420 lawyers, foundation officers and other supporters, he left no doubt where he and First Lady Mary O’Keeffe stand on legal aid. “It is your responsibility – and mine – to help the Campaign for Equal Justice,” Mary and I believe this very deeply. “To us it is the essence of why one wants to be a lawyer. And we’re both ready to make every active lawyer in Oregon a believer too.”

Oregon lawyers have much to celebrate. This year’s annual fund campaign raised $730,000, equal to our success last year. While not quite reaching the $750,000 goal, few organizations were able to equal their prior year’s performance in this economic climate. The Annual Campaign kicked off in several stages, starting with an address by Representative Lane Shetterly to Marion and Polk County supporters at their fifth annual lunch at Mission Mill on Sept 13. On September 19, the Annual Advisory Committee Meeting and Campaign kick-off dinner were held to launch the statewide effort.

Legal Aid Open House events at offices throughout the state helped bolster support in October. Keynote speakers at the 16 events on October 23 included: Representative Darlene Hooley and Senator Ron Wyden, Federal Judges Owen Parner, Thomas Coffin, and Garr King, Oregon Supreme Court Justices Wallace P. Canon, Jr., Thomas Balmer and William Rigs; Oregon Court of Appeals Judges David Brewer, David Schuman, Robert Wulff, and current and former Oregon Legislators Neil R. Bryant, Alan Bates, Lenn Hannon and Peter Courtenay; Oregon Attorney General Hardy Myers, the Governor’s General Counsel, Danny Santos, Jackson County Circuit Court Judge, Ross Davis; OSB President-Elect Charles R. Williamson, PLF Executive Director Ira Zarov; Campaign Board Chair Henry Hewitt; and Legal Services Corporation Vice President Mauricio Villers. All of our distinguished speakers and legal aid directors and staff helped raise awareness of the need for legal services for low-income Oregonians. Awards for pro bono services were presented at each event.

As always, the success of the Annual Campaign resides in its committees. Bill Crow of Miller Nash provided strong leadership of the large firm committee, which netted the highest level of contributions yet from Portland’s top 25 law firms. Collectively they gave $277,000. Cheryl Rath of Schwabe Williamson & Wyatt and David Varrt Hof of Stoel Rives co-chaired the Associates Committee, which contributed significantly to the success of large firms. Steve Larson of Stoll Stoll Berker Eteryk & Shibahara kept the Campaign a front burner issue for OTELA members, who contributed $138,450.

Mayor donors, the fastest-growing group of contributors, increased from 122 to 144 and contributed $227,216. Rod Lewis, Emi Donis, Lou Savage and Mabsie Walters created the $84 a month club – an idea that netted many new donors at $1000 and above.

David Denecke of Harrang Long Gary Rudnick and Mark Wada of Farleigh Wada & Wett co-chaired the Mid-Size firm committee. Corbett Gordon of Fisher & Phillips and Cecil Reiniche-Smith of Zimmer & Bruch continued to lead the effort with Small Firms and Solo Practitioners.

Outside of Portland, Larry Brubee and Jamie Daigle of Brubee & Stockton reached lawyers in Washington County. Neil Bryant of Bryant Lovljen & Jarvis and Dennis Karpoff of Karpoff Peterson Noteboom Hamer & Sayeg led the Central Oregon effort; and Gerry Gaydos of Gaydos Churchill & Baker, John Garldart of Doyle Garland Nelson and Lawrence Hamblen of Lane County Legal Aid Service were leaders in Lane County. In Marion County, Mary Mertens James of Harrang Long Gary Rudnick, William Nealy of the Department of Justice and Joseph Penna spearheaded efforts. Jackson County’s campaign was co-chaired by Joe Carter and Campaign co-chair Douglass Schmon.

Oregon State Bar Sections continued their leadership role. Eighteen sections contributed this year: Alternative Dispute Resolution, Appellate Practice, Business Law, Business Litigation, Civil Rights, Constitutional Law, Construction Law, Consumer Law, Debar Creditors, Disability Law, Elder Law, Estate Planning, Government Law, Indian Law, Labor and Employment Law, Litigation, Real Estate and Land Use, and Securities Regulation. Special thanks go to the Real Estate and Land Use Section for their continuing contribution of $5000. Oregon Women Lawyers also deserves thanks as their members matched, in a matter of days, $4000 in contributions provided by Mary Mertens James, Emi Donis and two anonymous donors.

The Annual Campaign and successful Open House events provide a solid base for our work to increase state and federal funding. In January 2003, Senator Gordon Smith co-sponsored a bill which resulted in a $95.5 million increase in SLC funding. The American Judicature Society, the American Bar Association and the Legal Services Corporation have recognized our senators with national awards and coverage for their bipartisan efforts in support of access to justice.

Foundation and corporate support continue to play an important role in sustaining legal aid. In 2002 we received grants from the PacificCorpor Forum for Learning, the Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundation, the Jackson Foundation, Washington Mutual, Wells Fargo, Fannie Mae Foundation, U.S. Bancorp Foundation, Oregon Community Foundation, the Rose E. Tucker Charitable Trust, the Meyer Memorial Trust, and the Equity Foundation.

We have also launched the Oregon Access to Justice Endowment Fund. This joint effort of the Campaign for Equal Justice, the Oregon State Bar and the Oregon Law Foundation has received pledges, gifts and bequests totaling $474,390. The Oregon Community Foundation will manage the endowment funds. We anticipate considerable fundraising activity for the endowment fund this next year.

Oregon’s role as a model for the nation was the cover story in the Legal Service Corporation’s new Equal Justice Magazine. Most of the article was reprinted in the November Oregon State Bar Bulletin. This is an easy effort to lead because of all of you who serve on committees and contribute your dollars. You share a commitment to equal justice and a vision for Oregon that extends equal justice to all Oregonians, rich or poor, and brings credit to our profession.

Edwin A. Harnden Lawrence B. Rew Douglas H. Schmon
Thank you for contributing to the Campaign. We apologize if we left out or misprinted anyone’s name.