



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Gregg Kelley
202-661-5964

**THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CONGRATULATES
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JONATHAN SMITH, ON RECEIVING
2009 MEYER FOUNDATION EXPONENT AWARD FOR LEADERSHIP**

WASHINGTON, DC, October 6, 2009 – The Board of Trustees of The Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia ("Legal Aid") is proud to congratulate Executive Director, **Jonathan Smith**, on receiving a 2009 Meyer Foundation Exponent Award. Mr. Smith is one of five nonprofit executives honored by the Meyer Foundation for demonstrating outstanding leadership in the Greater Washington, DC region. The Exponent Award also provides a \$100,000 grant to each recipient's organization.

"This award is a testament to the commitment and hard work that Jonathan has given to Legal Aid over the last seven years," said **Martin Klepper**, President of Legal Aid's Board of Trustees. "Jonathan has led Legal Aid during some very challenging times, and has not only increased the number of Legal Aid attorneys serving the community, but done so while expertly managing limited resources."

Mr. Smith joined Legal Aid in 2002 and since that time has created Legal Aid's Appellate Advocacy Project, a program designed to positively affect the decisional law of D.C.'s highest court as it impacts persons living in poverty. In addition, Mr. Smith was also the driving force behind the Courthouse Legal Services Project, which established a collaborative legal services office in the Landlord Tenant Branch of the Court. Likewise, Mr. Smith worked tirelessly with the Board of Trustees to create a Consumer Law practice, to focus on consumer issues, specifically working to end practices that reduce the ability of families to move out of poverty.

"Being a part of Legal Aid and working along side our extraordinary staff and Board has been a tremendous privilege for me," said Jonathan Smith. "This award acknowledges our collective hard work on behalf of our clients. While the past year has been a challenge a for the entire nonprofit community, I am proud of what we have achieved on behalf of those living in poverty in Washington, DC."

#

For over 75 years, Legal Aid has been ensuring that the American system of justice works for everyone, especially those living in poverty. Legal Aid is a nonprofit law firm that represents clients who have no other means of obtaining legal assistance in civil cases. Legal Aid has worked to prevent unnecessary evictions, preserve affordable housing, protect victims of domestic violence, stabilize family relationships, and ensure access to health and government benefits.