

Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation

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Statement by Martha Rush O'Mara on behalf of the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation's Board of Directions

Regarding SJC Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall's Retirement

BOSTON, July 22, 2010 – It is with deepest appreciation and respect that we express our gratitude to retiring Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall for her many years of inspired leadership of the judiciary and unstinting dedication to issues concerning access to justice. Chief Justice Marshall has been a true champion of civil legal assistance to the poor and has demonstrated her commitment to indigent clients continually over the past 10 years in her capacity as the leader of the Massachusetts judiciary. Because of her steadfast leadership, many thousands of low-income families and individuals have received assistance with legal problems threatening their basic needs.

In advocating for access to justice, Chief Justice Marshall often cited her own personal experience in caring for her elderly mother who suffered the advanced stages of Alzheimer's disease. She recounted that because of the myriad and often contradictory state and federal rules concerning her mother's proper care, she turned to an elder affairs attorney for help. "If I, the head judicial officer of the Commonwealth, had difficulty navigating the maze of operative laws on my own, imagine the plight of a son or daughter of limited means, or limited English proficiency, seeking aid for a critically ill parent." She personally recognized and understood the challenges facing low-income residents with legal problems affecting their very survival.

On behalf of the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation, we thank Chief Justice Marshall for her many years of service and wish her the best as she retires. She will be greatly missed.

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