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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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NLADA ESTABLISHES “HELPING HANDS: THE EQUAL JUSTICE COLLEAGUES’ SUPPORT FUND”

WASHINGTON, DC, September 20, 2005 — NLADA is pleased to announce the establishment of “Helping Hands: The Equal Justice Colleagues’ Support Fund” to provide financial assistance to staff in legal aid and public defender offices who have suffered direct and significant personal loss as a result of Hurricane Katrina. The NLADA Insurance Program, continuing its mission of investing in the equal justice community, is making an initial contribution of \$10,000 to the fund, which is intended to aid the staff members whose lives have been most impacted.

“Many of the people who have suffered tragedies beyond comprehension are low-income clients whose needs for legal assistance have only escalated in the wake of Katrina,” said Jo-Ann Wallace, NLADA president and CEO. “NLADA is actively engaged in supporting the much needed client relief efforts taking place. Yet, a large number of civil legal aid and public defender colleagues have suffered difficult personal losses as well.” Many homes in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama were destroyed or remain without electricity, gas or phone service. For example, seventy-five percent of the legal aid staff and public defenders in New Orleans are currently homeless. “So many of our colleagues in the affected areas have resiliently responded to the immense needs of their clients, yet they themselves face vast challenges in their own lives as a result of this tragedy,” Wallace said. “We must do all we can to help provide them with a firm foundation at home so that they can continue to nobly face the daunting tasks ahead of them.”

This fund is modeled after the “Helping Hands Fund” established by the Legal Aid Bureau of Maryland, which collects and distributes funds for Legal Aid Bureau staff in need. To support “Helping Hands: The Equal Justice Colleagues’ Support Fund,” please visit http://www.nlada.org/About/About_Donate to contribute online or to fill out the pledge form.

You may also send your contributions directly to NLADA Helping Hands at 1140 Connecticut Ave., NW, Ste. 900, Washington, DC 20036. Please write “Helping Hands” in the memo line of your check or money order. For more information, please visit www.nlada.org/About/About_Donate or contact Sara Fusco, assistant director of development at (202) 452-0620 ext. 232

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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.