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Media Contact: Erin Ruehrwein
Phone: 312/988-5574
Email: ruehrwee@staff.abanet.org
Online: www.abanews.org

Media Contact: Deborah Weixl
Phone: 312/988-6126
Email: weixld@staff.abanet.org
Online: www.abanews.org

Chief Justice Margaret H. Marshall of Massachusetts to Receive Pursuit of Justice Award

Award recognizes commitment to access to justice

CHICAGO, Jan. 15, 2009 — The American Bar Association Tort Trial & Insurance Practice Section will honor Margaret H. Marshall, chief justice of Massachusetts, with the Pursuit of Justice Award, which recognizes lawyers and judges who have shown outstanding merit and who excel in providing access to justice for all.

The award will be presented to Marshall on Feb. 14 during the ABA Midyear Meeting in Boston at the TIPS Pursuit of Justice Awards dinner at the EMC Club at Fenway Park, 20 Yawkey Way beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Marshall has been a leader among state chief justices in assuring access to the courts and is a long time supporter of judicial independence. As chair of the board of directors of the National Center for State Courts and chair of the Conference of Chief Justices, she has taken a leadership role in the work of these organizations to support fair and impartial courts. She has also served on various ABA committees, including the Commission on the 21st Century Judiciary and the Standing Committee on Judicial Independence.

A native of South Africa, Marshall graduated from Witwaterstrand University in Johannesburg in 1966. In 1966, she was elected as president of the National Union of South African Students. She served as president until 1968, when she came to the United States to pursue her graduate studies. She received a master's degree from Harvard University, and her Juris Doctor from Yale Law School.

Marshall was an associate, and later a partner, in the Boston law firm of Csapler & Bok, and was a partner in the Boston law firm of Choate, Hall & Stewart. Prior to her appointment to the Supreme Judicial Court, she was vice president and general counsel of Harvard University. Marshall was first appointed as an associate justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts in November 1996, and was named Chief Justice in September 1999 by Governor Paul Cellucci. She began her term on October 14, 1999 following her confirmation by the Governor's Council. Marshall is the second woman to serve on the Supreme Judicial Court in its more than 300 year history, and the first woman to serve as chief justice.

Speaking for the section, Chair Timothy Bouch of Charleston, S.C., said “TIPS is proud to honor Chief Justice Margaret Marshall of Massachusetts with the Pursuit of Justice Award for her dedication to the values of an independent and fair system of justice. She has demonstrated her commitment to assure that everyone is afforded their day in court. Throughout her career, she has worked for fairness and transparency and she has long advocated and advanced professionalism. She has been a voice for judges, responding to criticism leveled at the U.S. Supreme Court for citing foreign precedents, arguing that we can learn from global perspectives and she has suggested that it is a useful way to understand even state constitutions. She has led the Massachusetts judiciary during a time of intense conflict with the state legislature, and has earned high marks for her leadership from both her supporters and opponents.”

The ABA Tort Trial & Insurance Practice Section unites plaintiff, defense, insurance and corporate counsel to advance the civil justice system. TIPS is a national source of expertise in tort, trial and insurance practice and brings lawyers together to share information and speak out on issues of importance. The section, with over 32,000 members, has 34 general committees that focus on substantive and procedural matters in areas across the broad spectrum of civil law and practice. For more information about the Tort Trial & Insurance Practice Section visit the TIPS Web site, www.abanet.org/tips.

With more than 400,000 members, the American Bar Association is the largest voluntary professional membership organization in the world. As the national voice of the legal profession, the ABA works to improve the administration of justice, promotes programs that assist lawyers and judges in their work, accredits law schools, provides continuing legal education, and works to build public understanding around the world of the importance of the rule of law.

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***Editors Note:** Reporters are welcome to attend the award presentation at the ABA Midyear Meeting. Media credentials can be obtained by contacting the ABA Press Room in the Hynes Convention Center, Exhibit Hall D, beginning Thursday, Feb. 12 or registering in advance at www.abanews.org. For more information on the award or TIPS contact Deborah Weixl, ABA Division for Media Relations and Communication Services, at 312/988-6126 or e-mail weixld@staff.abanet.org. On site, call 847/902-9019.*

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