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Executive Director

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LEGAL AID BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPOINTS M. NALANI FUJIMORI AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Board of Directors of the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii has appointed M. Nalani Fujimori to the position of Executive Director of Hawaii's oldest and largest non-profit public interest law firm, effective May 13, 2009.

The economic downturn has deeply affected and challenged non-profit organizations throughout the country, and the Legal Aid Society is no exception. However, the daunting challenge of guiding Legal Aid through these tough economic times was one which Nalani eagerly accepted. She brings over 10 years of experience with Legal Aid to the position of Executive Director in one of the firm's most challenging times.

Board President George Zweibel states, "Legal Aid and the community it serves could not be more fortunate. Nalani has proven time and time again, through her leadership, dedication, and tireless efforts – in and out of the program – that she is the right person to assume the reins at Legal Aid today and to lead the program into the future."

Board Member and past President David Reber adds, "I am delighted that Nalani is Legal Aid's new Executive Director. She is an exceptionally talented lawyer and leader with many years of valuable experience that have prepared her perfectly for this position. I know she will work tirelessly to retain our program's reputation as one of the best in the country."

"I thank the Board of Directors for putting their trust in me as the Executive Director." Nalani says, "While the next few years will be difficult, I am up for the challenge and the opportunity to help shape Legal Aid into an organization which will be even more client oriented and in touch with the needs of the community."

ABOUT NALANI

On October 24th 2008, Nalani received the Hawaii State Bar Association's coveted *C. Frederick Schutte Award*, an honor recognizing an attorney's exemplary service to the community. Nalani was a key member of the Supervisory Team of the Access to Justice Hui (ATJ), which released the first civil legal needs assessment in 14 years in November of 2007.

The ATJ's goal was to carry out a statewide assessment of the civil legal needs of low and moderate-income residents of Hawai'i and to develop a community wide action plan to increase equal access to justice in Hawai'i. This report would not be complete without Nalani's involvement and guidance.

A Kamehameha Schools graduate, Nalani joined Legal Aid in 1999 as a staff attorney on Moloka'i. She managed Legal Aid's Maui County Offices from 2001 through 2004, when she was

appointed as Legal Aid's Deputy Director. Nalani received her law degree from New York University School of Law; and graduated Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa from Macalester College, St. Paul, Minnesota, with a degree in Sociology.

Prior to joining Legal Aid, Nalani did death penalty appellate work through New York University's Death Penalty Fellowship Program, assisted in the filing of a class action law suit concerning the sexual harassment of women inmates, clerked for a law firm specializing in non-profit housing development, and clerked with the Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation.

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Founded in 1950, Legal Aid is Hawaii's oldest and largest non-profit law firm, dedicated to assisting the low- to moderate-income community. Our mission is to achieve fairness and justice for Hawaii's people through quality representation, advocacy, community partnerships, education and outreach. For more information, visit: www.legalaidhawaii.org