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Boston College Law School

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3/24/09--Boston College Law School has named five alumni to receive special awards for their contributions to the legal community and to the Law School. The awards will be presented at the School's annual Law Day celebration, to be held on April 29, 2009 at Boston's Seaport Hotel.

Mary "Meg" Connolly '70 has been selected to receive the St. Thomas More Award, given to a member of the legal community who best represents the ideals of St. Thomas More in professional and private life.

Ms. Connolly's entire career has been devoted to public interest law. She began as a legal services staff attorney in Brockton with the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, and later served as Regional Counsel to the New England Regional Office of the Office of Economic Opportunity/Community Services Administration. Since 1985, she has been the executive director of the Volunteer Lawyers Project (VLP) of the Boston Bar Association. In her 24 years of service, the Boston resident has built a model structure for facilitating private bar participation in civil pro bono work. She has announced that she will be retiring at the end of this year.

Ms. Connolly is a member of the Standing Committee on Pro Bono of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court; consultant for the ABA Center for Pro Bono Peer Consultation Project, and a past member of the ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service. She is a past co-chair of the Delivery of Legal Services Section of the Boston Bar Association and its committee on Public Interest.

She served as president of the Boston College Law School Alumni Association from 2003-04, and is an associate member of the School's Board of Overseers. She was the 1993 recipient of the BC Law Alumni Association's Honorable David S. Nelson Public Interest Law Award. In 2002, she was featured as one of 125 Women Who Make a Difference in the Boston Women's Education and Industrial Union's photo exhibit. In 2003, Ms. Connolly was the recipient of the Distinguished Alumna Award of Marygrove College, and in 2005, she received the Founders Medal from Boston College Law School. In 2008, she was a member of the inaugural Class of Women of Justice.

Dr. David A.T. Donohue '71, and Christopher Mansfield '75, have been chosen to jointly receive The William J. Kenealy Award for their contributions to benefit the Law School, its students and alumni. Dr. Donohue has given the largest individual gift to date for an Assistant Professorship in Business Law. Mr. Mansfield facilitated the largest gift ever to the Law School, a $3.1M pledge from Liberty Mutual for a Professorship and the endowment of a writing award in Insurance Law.

Dr. Donohue is the founder and president of both International Human Resources Development Corporation (IHRDC) and Arlington Storage Corporation. He is a technical specialist, businessman, attorney, and a highly regarded lecturer in the teaching of management
programs devoted to the "business of oil and gas." He has successfully designed and taught these "business game" programs to more than 10,000 members of the international oil and gas industry on both in-house and public bases. He was the developer of an innovative, video-based learning system for the upstream petroleum industry, which has now been converted to IPIMS, a widely licensed e-Learning system. Dr. Donohue is also the developer and owner of independent underground gas storage facilities in New York State. In his early career he held various positions in engineering and research for Exxon, and served on the faculty of Pennsylvania State University. Dr. Donohue holds a Ph.D. in Petroleum & Natural Gas Engineering from Pennsylvania State University. He is active in public affairs in his hometown of Wellesley, a member of the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) and Alumni Fellow of Pennsylvania State University. He is a member of the Board of Overseers and the Business Advisory Council of Boston College Law School.

Mr. Mansfield is the senior vice president and general counsel at Liberty Mutual Insurance Company, a position he has held since 1988. For the past seven years, Mr. Mansfield has served the greater Boston community as a director of the Pine Street Inn. He is also a director of the New England Legal Foundation, the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation, as well as a Corporator of Dedham Savings and is active in the American Bar Association. A resident of Dedham, Mr. Mansfield is a member of the Board of Overseers and the Business Advisory Council of Boston College Law School.

In 2008, Mr. Mansfield was integral to the effort to bring the largest-ever gift to Boston College Law School, a $3.1 million pledge from Liberty Mutual Group to establish the Liberty Mutual Insurance Professorship in property and casualty insurance law. This gift places Boston College Law School in a leadership role in the field of insurance law, and increases the Law School's exposure in the academic and business community both nationally and internationally. Mr. Mansfield and his wife Laura Mansfield (Nursing '72), also personally pledged $200,000 to establish the Chris and Laura Mansfield Law School Scholarship.

Elizabeth Cremens, Class of 1974, is the recipient of The Hon. David S. Nelson Public Interest Law Award for her contributions to the public sector. Ms. Cremens is vice president of the Middlesex Defense Attorneys, Inc. (MDA), a non-profit organization that administers criminal defense services for indigents accused of crimes in Middlesex County. MDA manages this program for the Committee for Public Counsel Services, the state agency that oversees indigent criminal defense services in Massachusetts. The Medford resident has a private practice in Boston in criminal law and offers her services in pro bono work.

Richard A. Cohen, Class of 1972, will be awarded the Daniel G. Holland Achievement Award for his lifetime of service to the disabled. The Concord, New Hampshire resident has been the executive director of the New Hampshire Disabilities Rights Center (DRC) since 2002. In addition to his director duties, he performs a policy role by working with consumers, families, legislators, other government officials, and disability and advocacy groups to seek solutions to problems faced by individuals with disabilities. Mr. Cohen spent the first 11 years of his career working for New Hampshire Legal Assistance. Among the cases he litigated were Laaman vs. Helgemoe and Garrity vs. Gallen. Laaman resulted in improvements in conditions, educational, vocational medical, mental health and other services and programs at the New Hampshire State Prison, as well as the abolition of solitary confinement. Garrity was recently given the distinction by New Hampshire Magazine as one of the two most important class action law suits in New Hampshire's history. The case ultimately helped make New Hampshire the first state to run a virtually institution-free system of services for persons with developmental disabilities.

Mr. Cohen left New Hampshire in 1984 and received two successive appointments as a court monitor to oversee compliance in two disability class action cases. He subsequently served in state government in Massachusetts for six years, principally in the position of director of investigations for the Department of Mental Retardation. He joined the DRC staff in the late 1990s, first as its policy specialist and then as executive director. From 1998-2003 Mr. Cohen was a member of the Oversight Panel monitoring New Hampshire’s compliance with the Eric L. Settlement Agreement requiring changes to child protection responsibilities. In 2005 he was
appointed by Governor Lynch as chair of the Governor’s Commission on Area Agencies.

Established by presidential proclamation in 1958, Law Day is a long standing tradition across the nation and at Boston College Law School. Each year the Alumni Association selects distinguished alumni and others to receive special awards for their contributions to the legal community and to Boston College Law School.

Founded in 1929, Boston College Law is one of the nation’s best and most selective law schools, enrolling 800 students from 35 states and 130 colleges and universities. Currently ranked 26th by US News and World Report, it is also ranked in the Top 5 for both Best Professors and Career Prospects by the Princeton Review and in the Top 15 in Recruitment by the National Law Journal.