

For Release [noon PST]
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Portland Law Firm Contributes Settlement Funds to Help Struggling Oregonians

PORTLAND, Oregon — January 16, 2009 — The local law firm of Slater Ross has arranged for a generous contribution in the amount of \$170,000 to be contributed to the Lawyers' Campaign for Equal Justice, the fundraising arm for Oregon's civil legal aid programs, to be used to provide legal help to low-income Oregonians in housing matters.

The contribution of cy pres funds comes from a class action lawsuit that Michael Ross and Christopher Slater litigated in Multnomah County. Slater Ross represented a class of 30,000 tenants who were being overcharged by landlords and a billing company. The settlement agreement provided that any money left over from the distribution of the fund, after the class members were given notice, would be sent to the Oregon Law Center for the purpose of providing Fair Housing education, training and advocacy.

The Oregon Law Center will use the Slater Ross money to fund a three-year Fair Housing Staff Attorney position. "For the first time, Oregon will have an attorney position entirely dedicated to doing fair housing and fair lending work for low-income Oregonians," said Ed Johnson, the Housing Litigation Coordinator for the Oregon Law Center. "This money will allow us to do outreach and education on housing discrimination in vulnerable communities. It will also increase our capacity to represent low-income victims of housing discrimination."

Christopher Slater and Michael Ross presented the check to the Campaign for Equal Justice at a January 15, 2009 gathering at Mahonia Hall, where First Lady Mary Oberst thanked Slater Ross for their excellent advocacy and willingness to think outside the box to help fund access to justice in Oregon. According to First Lady Mary Oberst, an attorney and long time advocate of legal services for the poor, "We continue to meet less than 20% of the civil legal services for the poor. In this time of economic downturn, the solution to the funding crisis will require a multi-faceted approach, including money from private lawyers, the state and federal government, foundations, and the innovative approach offered by Slater Ross."

More information about Slater Ross can be found at www.slaterross.com. To learn more about the Campaign for Equal Justice, please visit www.cej-oregon.org.