



## News Release

March 11, 2013

Contact: Chris Saunders  
619-961-4311  
csaunders@tjssl.edu

### Affordable Legal Services Available Through TJSL's Solo Practice Center

*Center is Helping Citizens with Low Cost Representation*

SAN DIEGO – Thomas Jefferson School of Law's new Center for Solo Practitioners is providing affordable legal services to San Diego citizens from its downtown San Diego offices at 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Broadway.

Since it opened last November, the center has so far helped dozens of clients with their cases –many of whom didn't think they could afford a lawyer.

The Center is an incubator program for TJSL alumni to gain the skills and experience they need to succeed in solo practice and to provide low-cost legal representation to people who are traditionally cut off from legal services and denied access to justice because it is too expensive.

"Each of the lawyers in the Center for Solo Practitioners is dedicated to providing reasonably-priced legal services to low- and middle-income people," said experienced attorney and Professor Lilys McCoy, the director of the program. "This segment of the legal market has been traditionally underserved."

The nine lawyers in residence at the center are using their TJSL education and training to provide high-quality legal services in a variety of practice areas, including family law, consumer law, employment law, estates and trusts, small-business advising, immigration law, landlord tenant law, personal injury, real property law and criminal law.

One example of a successful outcome is a civil harassment case handled by one of the Center's lawyers, Hannah Bingham, a 2010 TJSL graduate. For more than a year, a woman in San Diego's Somali community had been terrorized by another woman in the Somali community. It involved threats and intimidation by a woman who ran an under-the-table business after Bingham's client had opened a similar legitimate business.

"Fortunately, I was able to prove that the opposing party perjured herself, and that she was attempting to use the system to harass my client," said Bingham. "The judge found that the woman had violated an already existing restraining order and had perjured herself in court. She then ordered payment of attorney fees, suggesting that I submit an amended request with higher attorney fees and denied the multiple applications filed by the opposing party. The judge then told me, 'Counsel, you have done a great job. I want your card. There are many people who need an attorney like you.'"

Each of the solo practitioners has their own solo practice and clients within the office, but they also have the advantage of working in a collaborative setting, which allows them to consult with the other lawyers on cases and benefit from each other's legal experience.

Modeled on a concept developed originally at City University in New York (CUNY), TJSL's Center for Solo Practitioners incubator program is a leader in what is becoming a trend in post-graduate legal

education: to help lawyers succeed in the complex business of running their own practice.

“It is important for those of us in legal education to think creatively and broadly when helping to train new lawyers in how to make a living as an attorney in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” said Professor McCoy.

The work of all of the solo practitioners has impressed their director, Professor McCoy.

“I am honored to be working with the nine lawyers in the inaugural class of the Center for Solo Practitioners,” said Professor McCoy. “Each of them is bright and highly motivated. They amaze me every day with their passion for their clients and their law practices.

Citizens who are interested in consulting with one of the solo practitioners can call: **619-550-4879**

# # #