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INCORPORATED

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News Release

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FLAG's Susan Stokes to receive MJF award for "service to low-income clients"

ST. PAUL, MINN. — The Minnesota Justice Foundation (MJF) will on Thursday, Nov. 15, honor Susan E. Stokes, Executive Director of Farmers' Legal Action Group, Inc. (FLAG), with its Direct Legal Service Award as part of its 30th Anniversary Celebration at International Market Square in Minneapolis.

MJF annually honors Minnesota legal professionals for their exemplary service to low-income clients. Ms. Stokes has been FLAG's Executive Director since November 2005. An Iron Range native, she joined FLAG in January 2002, became its Legal Director in June 2002, and became its Executive Director in 2005. Ms. Stokes' work at FLAG has included supervising its litigation, authoring many of FLAG's *amicus* briefs, and overseeing FLAG's outreach to and work with the Hmong-American farming community.

Susan was previously a partner at the law firm of Sprenger & Lang, where she litigated civil rights class actions, including *Beckmann v. CBS*, and *Kosen v. American Express Financial Advisors*, both groundbreaking gender discrimination class actions. From 1989 to 1994, Susan was a civil litigator at the San Francisco law firm of Pillsbury Madison & Sutro (now Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman), where her *pro bono* work included being a founding member and Pro Bono Committee Co-Chair of the California Coalition for Battered Women in Prison from 1992 to 1994. She was also named "Attorney of the Year" by the Aids Legal Referral Panel for her extended *pro bono* representation of an HIV-positive individual in a wrongful termination suit. Susan received her B.A. from St. Olaf College in 1984 and her law degree from

the University of Minnesota Law School in 1989. She is admitted to practice in numerous district and appellate courts, including the United States Supreme Court.

FLAG annually assists hundreds of Minnesota's low-income family farmers with a broad range of legal services that help them manage debt and federal programs, recover from disasters, secure fair contracts and leases, and advocate for their civil rights – all in an effort to keep those farm families on the land.

In nominating her colleague for the MJF award, FLAG Program Director Lynn Hayes wrote, “Susan has a dynamic and unflagging passion to advocate for the rights of those in our society who don’t always have a seat at the table. For the past ten years at FLAG, she has worked to create economic opportunity and increase assets for low-income family farmers, and mold public policies that serve, build, and protect the assets of the many low-income farmers who produce the food we eat. Of particular note for this nomination are years of work by Susan that is, under her leadership, creating opportunity for literally hundreds Minnesota’s immigrant farmers.”

Reservations for MJF's 30th Anniversary Celebration may be made by calling 612.625.1584 or by sending an [e-mail to MJF](#). The event will be held on **Thursday, November 15, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.** at International Market Square in Minneapolis.

Farmers’ Legal Action Group, Inc. is a 26-year-old, St. Paul-based nonprofit law center dedicated to providing legal services and support to family farmers and their communities in order to help keep family farmers on the land.

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