

LEGAL AID SOCIETY

OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE AND THE CUMBERLANDS

Information for Release

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LEGAL AID SOCIETY REPORTS HUGE INCREASE IN CALLS FOR ASSISTANCE THIS YEAR

Nashville office received 10947 requests in first 100 business days of 2009

NASHVILLE, Tenn. June 2, 2009 – The Legal Aid Society, Tennessee’s largest provider of free legal services reports that in the first five months of this year, it received twice as many calls as it did last year.

Legal Aid Society received 27,765 in 2008 and almost 11,000 calls during the first 100 business days of 2009.

Lucinda Smith, managing attorney for the Nashville office and director of the Nashville Pro Bono Program, says much of the increase has to do with unemployment and bankruptcy cases.

“The economy has hit our client base very hard,” she said. “We’re getting twice as many calls in Nashville as last year.”

Smith said that the legal community has stepped up to help out with the increased demand, including establishing a new monthly free legal advice clinic focusing on debt issues. The new debt clinic takes place the first Tuesday of each month at the offices of the Legal Aid Society, 300 Deaderick St.

“Attorneys from Waller Lansden Dortch & Davis have volunteered to staff these monthly clinics,” Smith said. “In addition to an increase in requests for assistance, we’re also seeing more volunteer attorneys willing to take on pro bono cases. It is very gratifying to see our profession respond to the increase in need.”

The Legal Aid Society gives free civil legal aid to people who have nowhere else to turn. It serves 48 counties from offices in Clarksville, Columbia, Cookeville, Gallatin, Murfreesboro, Nashville, Oak Ridge, and Tullahoma. The organization is funded in part by the United Way.

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