

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE ANYTIME

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LEGAL SERVICES CREATES AWARD IN NAME OF FORMER GOV. KEAN; JUSTICE JAMES H. COLEMAN JR. FIRST RECIPIENT

EDISON—Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ) has established a special award in the name of former Gov. Thomas H. Kean, honoring him for his “lifelong public service and commitment to civil society and racial justice.”

Kean, often cited in the media as the most popular governor in state history, won election to a second term in 1985 with the largest victory ever, capturing all but three of the state’s 567 municipalities and gaining what no other Republican has ever achieved — 60 percent of the black vote.

LSNJ also announced that the first recipient of the Thomas H. Kean Leadership Award for the Advancement of Civil Society and Racial Justice will be former New Jersey Supreme Court Associate Justice James H. Colman Jr. who in 1994 became the first African American on the state’s highest court, and ultimately authored several major decisions focusing on racial justice.

Both will be honored at LSNJ’s Equal Justice Awards reception at 6 p.m. Oct. 15 in the Bridgewater Marriott Hotel. The ceremonies also will include awards to attorneys who did outstanding *pro bono* work in many of the state’s 21 counties.

Said LSNJ President Melville D. Miller Jr., “Throughout their outstanding years of public service Governor Kean and Justice Coleman have been stalwarts in their concern for the needs of the poor and in demonstrating time and again their strong commitment to advancing racial justice and a more civil society. They have not only spoken of that commitment, but lived it.”

Four law firms are sponsoring the event, with Porzio Bromberg & Newman leading the way as the “Equal Justice Leader” of the event. The three other firms cited as Equal Justice Partners are Lowenstein Sandler, LeClairRyan and Connell Foley. Other sponsors include Merck, and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Special Contribution Fund of the Princeton Area Community Foundation.

Kean and Coleman have been staunch supporters of Legal Services over the years, emphasizing the need for poor people to have legal representation in civil matters. During his days at the helm of the state, Kean advanced increased funding for LSNJ and promoted significant welfare reform. Coleman, who rose from segregated life in the south to New Jersey’s highest judicial position, has served as president of the LSNJ board.

Special awards also will be presented to key state legislators, including Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney, Assembly Speaker Vincent Prieto, Senate Majority Leader Loretta Weinberg, Senate Minority Leader Thomas H. Kean Jr., Assembly Minority Leader Jon M. Bramnick, and Sen. Peter J. Barnes III.

Additionally, there will be awards to the Robin Hood Foundation and the Hurricane Sandy New Jersey Relief fund.

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Legal Services of New Jersey, located in Edison, coordinates the state's system of Legal Services programs, which provide essential legal aid in civil matters to low-income people in all 21 counties.

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