

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR RELEASE AT WILL

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LEGAL SERVICES EXPERT ON ISSUES FACING EX OFFENDERS CITED FOR PRESTIGIOUS NAACP AWARD

EDISON— Akil Roper, chief counsel of reentry at Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ) and a lawyer who focuses his practice on helping those with criminal records navigate civil legal barriers, has received a prestigious award from the Metuchen-Edison Branch of the NAACP.

Roper, a Jersey City resident, received the Thurgood Marshall Legal Redress Award, for his “outstanding community services by promoting expungements” and helping ex-offenders navigate the process under which they may get their records wiped clean.

Roper, s vice president and assistant general counsel at the Edison-based LSNJ, has been a part of the nonprofit organization’s Prisoner Reentry Project since 2008 and running the project since 2011. Most recently, he was instrumental there in the creation of New Jersey’s first interactive website designed to help former offenders determine their eligibility for expungement and create forms which can then be filed with the court. Additionally, he has argued expungement cases before the New Jersey Supreme Court and lower courts, represented many others in expungement applications and other matters involving reentry rights and also has been involved in overseeing LSNJ efforts regarding ethnic justice, workers’ rights and Hurricane Sandy protections.

Legal Services of New Jersey (LSNJ) heads the state’s Legal Services system, a network of five independent non-profit corporations and is beginning its 50th year of providing free essential legal

aid in civil matters to low-income people through offices in all 21 counties. Since its inception, LSNJ has provided representation in 2.4 million cases.

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