



# MARYLAND LEGAL AID

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Media Contact:**

Jennifer Lavella  
Director of Marketing and Communications  
410-951-7683 office  
410-218-7313 cell  
jlavella@mdlaborg

## **Advocates of Civil Legal Aid and Equal Access to Justice to be recognized at the 24th Annual Equal Justice Awards Breakfast with Keynote Speaker Governor Wes Moore**

**BALTIMORE, Md.**, (May 3, 2023) - On Tuesday, May 16, Maryland Legal Aid's Equal Justice Council (EJC) will host its 24th Annual Equal Justice Awards Breakfast at the Lord Baltimore Hotel. This event honors and recognizes the individuals, law firms and community partners that are helping to ensure that all Marylanders have a fair shot at justice. **Governor Wes Moore** is this year's keynote speaker.

### **AWARDEES FOR 2023:**

#### ***Exemplar of Equal Justice Awards***

Warren S. Oliveri, Jr., Esq.  
Lee H. Ogburn, Esq.

At this year's event, we will present a special Exemplar of Equal Justice Award to two outstanding individuals for their exceptional dedication and exemplary service in support of MLA's mission. As President of MLA's Board of Directors for more than three decades, Warren Oliveri has overseen an astounding level of growth for Maryland Legal Aid, and led the organization through countless challenges and accomplishments. Lee Ogburn's outstanding leadership and many years of service as Co-Chair of Maryland Legal Aid's Equal Justice Council has also been exemplary, as he worked to strengthen the private bar's support of MLA, and much more. Over the years, their multifaceted efforts and extraordinary commitment to advancing MLA's mission have done so much to improve the health, safety, and financial stability of our most vulnerable neighbors. This award has only previously been given to the former co-chairs of the Equal Justice Council, Andrew Graham and Ben Rosenberg.

#### ***Executive Director's Award***

Ward B. Coe III, Esq. and Reena K. Shah, Esq.  
Maryland Access to Justice Commission

As Chair and Executive Director, respectively, of the Maryland Access to Justice Commission, Ward Coe and Reena Shah have been tireless in their work to level the legal playing field for disadvantaged Marylanders. Their thoughtful, effective leadership of the Commission has helped ensure that Marylanders with low-income are able to access legal assistance and protect their rights amid the unprecedented challenges of the last few years.

**Additional awards include:**

Community Partner for Justice Awards: Thread; Loyola University Maryland

Pro Bono Partner of the Year Awards: Ballard Spahr LLP; Association of Corporate Counsel - National Capital Region

Most Valuable Partner Award: The Honorable Pamela J. White

The Equal Justice Council is composed of leading partners from Maryland's top law firms and other prominent members of the Maryland Bar and corporate community. Since 1997, members of the EJC have raised critically needed funds for Maryland Legal Aid in order to promote equal access to justice, while also serving as dedicated advocates who raise awareness of the organization's important work.

Additionally, EJC members are charged with increasing *pro bono* involvement among private attorneys and participating in fundraising activities such as educational sessions and contacting foundations and corporations. Maryland Legal Aid's Development Unit works closely with the Equal Justice Council to provide administrative and informational support to increase contributions to the organization.

**Special Thanks to our Presenting Sponsors**



**Event Details: 24th Annual Equal Justice Awards Breakfast Details**

**What:** Maryland Legal Aid's Equal Justice Council 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Breakfast

**When:** Tuesday, May 16<sup>th</sup> | 7:45 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

**Where:** Lord Baltimore Hotel  
20 W. Baltimore St., Baltimore, MD 21201

For more information about the Equal Justice Awards breakfast, visit <https://www.mdlab.org/equal-justice-awards-breakfast/> or email Director of Development Graham Cowger, [gcowger@mdlaborg](mailto:gcowger@mdlaborg).

###

### About Maryland Legal Aid

Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) is a private, non-profit law firm that provides free, civil legal services to people who are in Baltimore City and Maryland's 23 counties from 12 offices. The firm handles cases involving a wide range of issues, including family, housing, government benefits, healthcare, employment, and consumer law. MLA also represents children in CINA (Child in Need of Assistance) proceedings in 16 jurisdictions. Other vulnerable populations, such as homeowners facing foreclosure, migrant and seasonal farm workers, people with developmental and mental health disabilities, nursing home and assisted living residents, and veterans seeking benefits and assistance with related legal issues also receive representation through special projects. MLA's Community Lawyering Initiative, which includes its Lawyer in the Library program, assists with expunging criminal records to remove barriers to obtaining housing, employment, and child custody through clinics held in libraries, community centers, non-profit organizations, places of worship, schools, healthcare facilities, and other communal spaces.

