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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Case Manager and Paralegal Justin Hayford Named 2016 Liberty Bell Award Winner

Annual Award Honors Non-Lawyer Working In the Legal System

CHICAGO, IL. (April 26, 2016)—The Young Lawyers Section (YLS) of the Chicago Bar Association named Justin Hayford, longtime case manager and paralegal, its 2016 Liberty Bell winner in honor of his quarter century of direct service, educational outreach, and public policy work on behalf of people living with HIV. The Liberty Bell award is the bar's highest honor awarded to a non-lawyer. It recognizes those who have given outstanding service by giving their time and energy to strengthen the effectiveness of the American system of freedom under law, in keeping with the spirit of our Constitution.

For 25 years, Justin has been a case manager and paralegal of AIDS Legal Council, now a program of Legal Council for Health Justice. In that time, he has tirelessly advocated on behalf of low-income people with HIV and AIDS who had nowhere else to turn for legal assistance. He has directly impacted the lives of thousands of clients, trained countless groups of service providers and legal professionals in HIV law, testified before legislative bodies, and taken on various state and local bureaucracies on behalf of the dignity, opportunity, and well-being of his clients.

Justin came to this work a few years after AIDS Legal Council was founded by James Monroe Smith. When he arrived, many people with HIV were still being fired from their jobs or evicted from their homes. Others were denied life-saving services or lost the support of family and friends in their hour of greatest need. Justin was there to meet clients wherever they were, and whenever they needed him.

Justin has written numerous articles focusing on various political and legal aspects of the AIDS crisis for the *Chicago Reader*, *The Progressive*, *The Public Interest Law Reporter*, *In These Times*, and *Positively Aware*, among other publications. He is also an award-winning cabaret performer and recording artist on the national LML Music label who uses his tremendous talent to raise funds for the Legal Council's

work. Proceeds from his albums, shows, and other performances are donated back to our programs. He raises over \$10,000 each year, with every dollar going right to programs serving clients in need.

The 2016 Liberty Bell Award will be presented by Justice Maureen E. Connors, Illinois Appellate Court, First District, 1st Division at the annual Judges Reception beginning at 5:00 p.m., Thursday, May 5th, at the Chicago Bar Association (CBA), 321 S. Plymouth Court, Chicago. Media is welcome. Event inquiries can be directed to Linda Heacox, 312-554-2012, lheacox@chicagobar.org.

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Legal Council for Health Justice uses the power of the law to secure dignity, opportunity, and well-being for people facing barriers due to illness and disability. All programs partner with health and hospital systems to train and support the care provider network, provide direct representation to referred patients, and conduct systemic advocacy to promote health equity among populations facing chronic, disabling, and stigmatizing health and social conditions.
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