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FAMU College of Law to Accept Haitian TPS Requests

ORLANDO, Fla. – The Florida A&M University (FAMU) College of Law Legal Clinic and Pro Bono Programs hosted a Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for the Haitian Community Training session in February and will begin accepting applications for TPS beginning Monday, March 15, 2010.

According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano has determined an 18-month designation of TPS for Haiti is warranted due to the January 12, 2010 devastating earthquake. As a result, Haitians who live in the U.S. are unable to return safely to the country. TPS is granted by the Secretary and will allow beneficiaries to remain in the United States and legally work for a set period of time until safe return is possible.

“In this time of extreme catastrophe it is important that we consider the Haitian countrymen who reside in America by providing them with a Temporary Protective Status,” said Senator Gary Siplin of the 19th District. The February training event was presented in conjunction with the Orlando-based lawmaker’s office.

The College of Law at 201 Beggs Avenue will offer the services Mondays through Wednesdays from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. by appointment only. Individuals may schedule appointments by calling (407) 254-3228. According to Clinic Director and Assistant Professor Ann Marie Cavazos, all TPS applicants must provide proof of Haitian Nationality; identity documents (passport, birth certificate) accompanied by photo identification; and evidence to show the applicant was physically present in the U.S. on January 12, 2010. Interpreters will be on site and all necessary forms to assist in completion of the TPS request will be available.

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“The FAMU College of Law Legal Clinic Program was developed to provide practical education for our students and assist in meeting the legal needs of the traditionally underserved in our area,” said LeRoy Pernell, dean of the FAMU College of Law. “Our students continually provide services to diverse communities, which addresses part of our overall mission.”

Attorney David Stoller, founding partner of Stoller & Moreno, served as the trainer for more than 85 FAMU College of Law students and faculty who will work with the Haitian community in administering the TPS documents. Stoller concentrates his practice on U.S. Immigration and Nationality Law. He is Board Certified by the Florida Bar in Immigration and Nationality Law and practices before the Department of Homeland Security, Department of State, Immigration Court and the Board of Immigration Appeals.

Joining Stoller at the February training were Mark Russelburg, Court Administrator in charge of Orlando Immigration Court and Krome Detention Court in Miami; Evans Mitchell, administrator of the Philadelphia Haitian Baptist Church, the largest local Haitian church in Central Florida; and Reverend Randolph Bracy, Pastor of New Covenant Baptist Church, and member of the FAMU College of Law Board of Visitors.

“I am extremely pleased that we, the College of Law, have mounted an effort to provide TPS services to the Haitian people,” said Regent Professor and former FAMU President Frederick Humphries. “I am delighted to learn that members of the local Bar are providing training to our young bright prospective lawyers to execute appropriately the immigration requirements.”

To ensure the process is administered correctly, an advisory panel consisting of faculty members, law school alumnae, and board certified immigration attorneys has been created. Stoller will aid in the panel as well as provide additional training as deemed necessary. FAMU law faculty members Eunice Caussade-Garcia, Nicky Boothe-Perry, Linda Rohrbaugh, Ka’Juel Washington, and Willie will supervise law students who administer the TPS documents May.

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The FAMU College of Law was founded in 1949 on the main campus in Tallahassee. After graduating 57 lawyers, the law school was closed by the state of Florida in 1968. The Florida Legislature voted to reopen the law school in 2000 and Orlando was selected as the location. The re-established FAMU College of Law opened its doors in 2002 and is now housed in a state-of-the-art facility in downtown Orlando's Parramore neighborhood. The FAMU College of Law received full accreditation from the American Bar Association in July 2009.