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CENTER FOR WOMEN IN LAW NAMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Linda Bray Chanow to Lead Center in Mission to Diminish Gender-Bias Against Women in Legal Field

AUSTIN, Texas – Jan. 27, 2010 – The Center for Women in Law at the University of Texas School of Law has appointed Linda Bray Chanow as the new Executive Director, effective immediately. Launched in 2009, the Center is the premier educational institution dedicated to the success of the entire spectrum of women in law, from first-year law students to the most experienced and accomplished attorneys.

“Linda is a nationally recognized expert on issues relating to women lawyers, and the Center is very gratified that it was able to recruit her and attract her family to Austin,” said Lauren Eaton Prescott (UT Law Class, 1975), one of the Center’s founders and a member of the Executive Director search committee.

In April 2009, the Center for Women in Law hosted the Women’s Power Summit on Law & Leadership, a three-day summit that united women leaders from across the legal field, including U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor (ret.), to achieve solutions for the challenges female attorneys face. Chanow, along with more than 150 women, attended the Summit, and it was there that she made an impression on both her fellow attendees and the founders.

“Linda has a national reputation for creating solutions for issues that confront women in the legal profession,” said founder Cathy Lamboley (UT Law Class, 1979), retired general counsel for the Shell Oil Company and currently principal consultant for CA Lamboley Consulting LLC. “She is someone whom I’ve worked with and have known by reputation for a number of years, and she has great enthusiasm for this whole area.”

Of the challenges facing women lawyers, advancing women lawyers into leadership positions is of particular concern to Chanow: “Women have been graduating from top law schools in high numbers — 40 percent or higher for more than two decades — but they haven’t been advancing.”

Women hold only 19 percent of all partnerships nationwide, which represents only about a four percent increase in the number of women partners during the past decade. A similar imbalance exists in the state judiciaries, federal judiciary and among general counsels of companies. And, the higher the position, the more imbalance that exists. Women attorneys of color occupy even fewer leadership positions, comprising less than two percent of partners in law firms.

“One of the things I’ll be doing is working intensely with law firms and other organizations to promote best practices designed to advance women lawyers into leadership positions,” said Chanow.

Settling in to her new position means, among other things, strategizing the best ways to continue to push for and implement change for women lawyers.

“Summit participants adopted by acclamation the Austin Manifesto, signaling the beginning of a coordinated national movement towards the advancement of women. A top priority is gathering information on the steps taken by the signatories and measuring progress pursuant to the Manifesto,” said Chanow. The Center will present these findings at its next Summit, which is expected to be held in 2011.

“Another wonderful thing the Center started was a meeting convening the ‘Thought Leaders,’ representatives from the leading organizations across the nation who are working to advance women and diversity in the legal profession,” said Chanow. “By bringing these leaders together, the Center has provided a forum for the groups to work

together, to share resources, and to develop synergies that will lead to greater progress than if the groups continued to work individually. That's what we hope to build on."

In addition to working with partnering organizations, Chanow foresees implementing leadership training programs for law students. "Efforts to advance women in the profession have historically focused on women who have been practicing for a number of years. To increase the number of women leaders, we need to start earlier to prepare law students to enter a profession that does not currently support their advancement."

This Spring, the Center will host an intensive, all-day leadership workshop for students, judicial law clerks and deferred associates that will utilize both experienced trainers and practicing attorneys. Students will work in interactive small groups to perfect skills such as effective communication and self-promotion that are critical to their long-term success in the profession.

Prior to leading the Center for Women in Law, Chanow served as Assistant Director at the Project for Attorney Retention (PAR), an initiative of the Center for WorkLife Law at the University of California Hastings College of the Law, and a leading research and advocacy group dedicated to advancing women lawyers and improving work-life balance for all lawyers. While at PAR, Chanow worked closely with PAR's Co-Directors, Distinguished Professor of Law Joan C. Williams and Cynthia Thomas Calvert to devise business-based solutions that provide best practices to law firms, law departments, lawyers and students.

She recently co-wrote *Reduced Hours, Full Success: Part-Time Partners in U.S. Law Firms*, which details the structure and effectiveness of current part-time partner arrangements in U.S. law firms and provides recommendations for law firms and part-time lawyers.

Chanow's other recent accomplishments include authoring *Actions for Advancing Women into Law Firm Leadership: Report of the National Association of Women Lawyers National Leadership Summit* and serving as co-chair of the Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia Initiative on Advancement and Retention of Women.

Chanow received her J.D. from American University's Washington College of Law. She began her legal career as a commercial litigator and bankruptcy lawyer at WilmerHale.

The Center for Women in Law at the University of Texas School of Law was founded by 39 women lawyers who have reached success in all areas of the legal profession – law firms, corporations, the judiciary and academia. The Center serves as a national resource to convene leaders, generate ideas, and lead change. More information is available at www.utexas.edu/law/academics/centers/cwl.

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