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Idaho State Bar Honors Monica Schurtman

BOISE - At its annual meeting in July, the Idaho State Bar honored Monica Schurtman, Associate Professor of Law and Supervisor of the College's Immigration Law Clinic at the University of Idaho College of Law. She was given the elite Service Award, which recognizes Idaho lawyers and judges for their exceptional contributions to justice and their communities.

Ms. Schurtman is a founding member of the Idaho Pro-Bono Immigration Law Network which trains attorneys to represent low income and indigent individuals in immigration proceedings. She presented numerous Bar and Foundation-sponsored training sessions for other attorneys on topics affecting the most vulnerable people in the legal system. Topics included immigration law basics; immigration issues related to family law, child protection, and criminal justice; and representation of applicants for permanent residency, naturalization, asylum and humanitarian visas for certain victims of domestic violence, trafficking, and other statutorily enumerated crimes; and relief from removal.

"I have helped organize and have participated in dozens of 'know-your-rights and responsibilities' educational programs in immigrant and refugee communities, and have spoken at broader public education events on immigration and international human rights laws," she said,

Asked about her inspiration for public service, Schurtman said, "My parents have always emphasized the importance of public service, giving back to my community and my country. My focus on service to immigrants was inspired by the experiences of my parents who immigrated to the United States as young adults, but only after years of perseverance and with assistance provided by people committed to serving others. Public service has taught me that none of us can thrive, or in some instances, even survive, without community support."

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