

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the promise of equal justice under law is the most fundamental tenet of our justice system; and

WHEREAS, many North Dakotans continue to lack access to legal assistance that is often critical to their independence and safety, thereby compelling them to resolve on their own, complex legal issues involving basic rights to child custody, housing, health, employment and financial security; and

WHEREAS, while members of North Dakota's legal community donate thousands of hours of *pro bono* legal services and make generous financial contributions to public interest legal organizations, and, despite legislative financial support of indigent legal services, there continues to exist an unmet need for legal assistance for thousands of disadvantaged North Dakotans; and

WHEREAS, Rule 6.1 of the North Dakota Rules of Professional Conduct underscores that lawyers have a special professional obligation to ensure that our justice system is accessible to all; and

WHEREAS, Celebrate *Pro Bono* Week, October 24-30, 2010, sponsored by the State Bar Association of North Dakota in conjunction with the American Bar Association, is designed to educate the public about the service *pro bono* lawyers provide to improve the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable citizens in our state;

NOW THEREFORE, the North Dakota Judicial Branch hereby recognizes and commends all *pro bono* volunteers for their contributions to those in our state who are most in need, and urge all members of the State Bar Association of North Dakota to engage in this worthy civic cause.

Dated this 12th day of October, 2010.



Gerald W. VandeWalle
Chief Justice

North Dakota Supreme Court

Attest:



Jenny Miller
Clerk of the Supreme Court

