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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 8, 2017****Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid Announces Drew Schaffer as New Executive Director**

Minneapolis, MN – May 8, 2017 - Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid (MMLA), Minnesota’s largest civil legal aid provider, today announced that its Board of Directors has selected Andrew (Drew) Schaffer as the organization’s new Executive Director.

“We are extremely excited to have found a new Executive Director with the leadership, poise, and deep commitment to our mission and clients,” said Robert McLeod, Board President of Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid (MMLA). “This is a time of many real and potential changes for our client community. We’re confident that Mr. Schaffer can build on MMLA’s long history of excellence and innovation addressing the civil legal needs of people with low-incomes in central Minnesota and people with disabilities across the state.”

The announcement follows a nationwide search undertaken after current Executive Director Cathy Haukedahl’s announcement last fall that she would be retiring in June 2017. Ms. Haukedahl has been with MMLA since 2002 and has served as its Executive Director for the past six years.

Mr. Schaffer has been in private practice, prior to which he was a Staff Attorney and Managing Attorney with Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid for 11 years. Schaffer was also an adjunct professor at the University of Minnesota Law School for 9 years. He and Ms. Haukedahl will begin a one-month transition starting May 22.

As Mr. Schaffer approaches this role he says, “To me there is nothing more exciting than the idea of leading Legal Aid in overcoming the present and future challenges the organization and our clients face. I cannot imagine a better way to spend every day.”

Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid was established as the Legal Aid Society of Minneapolis in 1913. For more than 100 years it has provided free civil legal services to individuals with low incomes on a wide range of civil legal issues, including: housing, family law, government benefits, immigration, tax, and consumer law. It also has projects targeted at the unique legal needs of youth and seniors. In addition, MMLA is the Protection and Advocacy System for the state of Minnesota and its Disability Law Center addresses the unique legal issues facing people with disabilities throughout the state. MMLA has offices in Minneapolis, St. Cloud, and Willmar. It closes over 10,500 civil legal cases each year.

Mr. Schaffer holds a JD from the University of Minnesota Law School. Mr. Schaffer did graduate work in geography at the University of Iowa, and graduated summa cum laude from St. Cloud State University, where he studied History and Geography. Mr. Schaffer is recognized as a legal expert on housing issues for people with low-incomes and has served on variety of advisory committees.