

McGlinchey Stafford PLLC Returns to New Orleans

November 17, 2005

Law firm vows to help refurbish the city that fostered the firm's beginning more than 30 years ago

New Orleans, LA – McGlinchey Stafford, PLLC, announced today that the firm recently began an organized staged return to the law firm's New Orleans office located on the corner of Magazine and Girod. To maintain business continuity, to continue to best serve clients, and to lessen disruptions to the families of the employees who work for the firm, McGlinchey Stafford attorneys are scheduled to return in three waves during November and December.

As the firm implemented its disaster recovery plan in the days before Katrina hit New Orleans, the majority of New Orleans attorneys and staff moved temporarily to one of the firm's other seven offices. Over the next weeks and months, the attorneys and staff worked seamlessly to serve the firm's national and local clients.

"We are elated to be moving back to New Orleans and we are proud of how people managed life away from home while tirelessly continuing to meet client needs," said **Rudy Aguilar**, Managing Partner of McGlinchey Stafford.

"Our attorneys and staff who were displaced were very resilient and barely skipped a beat in going back to work for our clients," said **Al Thomas**, Executive Director of Administration for the firm.

Through donations from attorneys and staff throughout the firm's seven other offices, approximately \$40,000 in cash and gift card donations are being distributed to associates and staff who sustained a total or significant loss due to the hurricane. In addition, through an effort organized and coordinated by the twelve-year-old son of a Member in the firm's Cleveland office, donations of more than 300 boxes of clothing, food, and other useful items were made to the displaced New Orleans staff.

In order to assist the firm's employees, McGlinchey Stafford provided two weeks of weather pay after the storm and prior to the commencement of return to work. In order to afford staff the needed paid time off to address Katrina related issues, the firm allotted an additional 10 days of paid leave for all McGlinchey Stafford New Orleans staff.

"Although the circumstances of this life-changing event were unbelievable and I, like many others in our office, lost my home, this tragedy brought our firm together as a family and I was overwhelmed with the outpouring of kindness and generosity from the staff and attorneys in all of our other offices. The Baton Rouge office

welcomed us with patience and understanding during our time of displacement,” said **Theresa Chatelain**, New Orleans staff member of the firm.

Another New Orleans staff member, **Cheryl Palmer**, recalls that her newly rented Baton Rouge apartment was not only furnished by generous donations from other employees in the firm, but these employees also delivered and set up the furniture in the apartment she shares with her mother who evacuated with her. “In the midst of this terrible ordeal, I have been uplifted by the many selfless acts of kindness shown by the people I work with and the company I work for. We have become a closer, stronger McGlinchey family because we’ve gone through this together and we are persevering.”

McGlinchey Stafford also encouraged the *pro bono* efforts of associate Beth Abramson. In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Beth dedicated virtually all of her time and energy to setting up and organizing a hotline and recruiting volunteer lawyers for the Disaster Legal Services Program, a program sponsored through the combined efforts of the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division, the Louisiana State Bar Association and FEMA. This program provides free legal advice to low-income individuals who were affected by the Hurricanes. McGlinchey Stafford also donated *pro bono* hours from many other McGlinchey lawyers for this noble cause.

To celebrate the firm’s return to New Orleans and to thank city and state officials for their extraordinary efforts, the firm will host an event in December at the McGlinchey Stafford New Orleans office. The event will celebrate the city of New Orleans and all of the people who make it such a unique place to live and work.

“We are thankful for our clients, city and state officials and business partners who worked with us during these times. New Orleans always will be a jewel and we are blessed to be a part of it. We look forward to the future and the roles we will play in helping our community grow,” Aguilar said.

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Rudy Aguilar

Al Thomas