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Lex Mundi Completes Four-Year Professionalism Project and Publishes “Lex Mundi and Professionalism: A Statement of Shared Fundamental Values”

Statement Outlines the Guiding Principles Leading Law Firms Aspire to Embody

(HOUSTON, August 26, 2008) Lex Mundi has announced the publication of *Lex Mundi and Professionalism: A Statement of Shared Fundamental Values*. The statement is the culmination of a four-year project to develop a practical understanding of the guiding principles of professionalism that law firms of significant prominence aspire to embody. The statement is intended to assist and encourage Lex Mundi member firms – and all firms that practice at the highest level – as they aspire to embody these principles in their practices.

The Lex Mundi professionalism project was led by Professor Timothy P. Terrell of the Emory University School of Law. According to Professor Terrell, “Professionalism must be distinguished from the more familiar topic of legal ethics.” While ethics has become synonymous with efforts to establish the minimum standards to which all members of the legal profession must adhere in order to maintain their licenses to practice, professionalism is aspirational in character. It is a set of fundamental values that go beyond the requirements and rules of legal ethics. Says Professor Terrell, “Professionalism is about lawyers at their best, rather than their acceptable least.”

Carl Anduri, President of Lex Mundi, commented, “The task that Lex Mundi undertook in developing this statement was to identify what must be added to the basic duties and responsibilities essential to the practice of law in order to define the characteristics of those who endeavor to provide superior legal services.”

The statement looks at legal professionalism through a “values to virtues” framework. It explains how six fundamental values of professionalism that describe the practice of the most respected lawyers – The Ethic of Excellence, the Ethic of Integrity, the Respect for the Legal System and Rule of Law, the Respect for Other Lawyers and Their Work, the Commitment to Accountability, and the Responsibility for the Adequate Distribution of Legal Services – intersect and combine to create three fundamental virtues – Highest Practical Value, Principled Enthusiasm, and Engaged Citizenship. These three combined virtues are the hallmarks of the best lawyers and firms and capture the full professional maturity of lawyers who practice at the highest level.

Says Anduri, “*Lex Mundi and Professionalism: A Statement of Shared Fundamental Values* is published to support lawyers throughout the profession, not only Lex Mundi member firm lawyers, but lawyers in any practice, anywhere.” Fred Krebs, President of the Association of Corporate Counsel, commented, “The values to virtues framework is useful to show the principles to which lawyers everywhere should aspire to earn the highest respect and to raise the bar for legal professionalism.”

Lex Mundi and Professionalism: A Statement of Shared Fundamental Values is available on the Lex

Mundi web site at:

<http://www.lexmundi.com/images/lexmundi/PDF/Publications/SharedFundamentalValues.pdf>.

Lex Mundi is the world's leading association of independent law firms. The association has more than 160 member firms around the world, representing approximately 21,000 lawyers. Membership in Lex Mundi provides member firms with a trusted network of law firms that share similar values and a similar focus on quality through which they can access global legal resources that enable them to serve their clients better and to improve continuously all aspects of their firms. Member law firms are located throughout North America, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, the Middle East and Africa. Through its nonprofit affiliate, the Lex Mundi Pro Bono Foundation, Lex Mundi member firms provide pro bono legal assistance to social entrepreneurs around the globe. For more information, please visit <http://www.lexmundi.com>.

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