

## For Immediate Release

The Legal Aid Society–Employment Law Center (LAS-ELC), San Francisco

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## Mary Jo Shartsis Elected Chair of San Francisco's Legal Aid Society

### Shartsis Friese LLP Founding Partner Takes on New Nonprofit Leadership Role

(SAN FRANCISCO, Calif., December 13) The board of directors of the Legal Aid Society of San Francisco - Employment Law Center (LAS-ELC) unanimously elected attorney Mary Jo Shartsis to be its new Chair, effective January 1, 2008. Shartsis will lead the 68-member board in governance and oversight of a range of legal aid programs that serve working poor families in California and nationally. Founded in 1916, the LAS-ELC, better known as "The Society," is the oldest legal service agency in the West and a national leader on issues affecting the working poor. The organization serves thousands of low-income and marginalized clients a year through free legal clinics in San Francisco, Berkeley, and San Jose, public education, direct representation, and advocacy.

Joan Messing Graff, the Society's President, commented: "This is a truly an exciting moment for us. Mary Jo is not only greatly admired and respected in the legal community; she is also a pathbreaker and role model for many women lawyers, with a deep sympathy for the everyday struggles of our low-income clients and their families. We are proud to have the opportunity to work more closely with her."

One of the founding partners of Shartsis Friese LLP, where her specialty is in general business litigation, Shartsis was named one of the "Top 50 Women Litigators" in California in 2003 by the Los Angeles and San Francisco *Daily Journal*. Her practice includes complex financial, corporate governance, fraud and intellectual property litigation. Her work also includes counseling clients on antitrust and employment compliance matters, and she has served as an arbitrator in complex commercial cases. Shartsis is also a member and former chair of the Litigation Section of the Bar Association of San Francisco. She serves on the Board of Governors for the Northern California Chapter of the Association of Business Trial Lawyers, various sections of the American Bar Association, and is a Fellow of the American Bar Foundation. She is a co-author of *California Federal Court Practice, Local Civil Rules Annotated*, a guide to local federal practice, and a contributing author of *Federal Pretrial Civil Procedure in California*, both of which are published by LexisNexis (Matthew Bender).

A member of the Legal Aid Society board since 1993, Shartsis previously served for several terms as Vice Chair. Outgoing Chair Robert M. Dell, Chairman and Managing Partner of Latham & Watkins LLP, said, "I could not imagine a more natural choice for a new Chair to lead this great institution. Mary Jo has a longstanding commitment to legal services and fully understands the challenges of ensuring that low-income individuals have equal access to justice. The Society will greatly benefit from her acumen and expertise."

“I’m truly honored to have been elected Chair,” says Shartsis. “For the past 92 years, the Society has been essential to the fabric of social and human services in the Bay Area. I’m looking forward to keeping up the private bar’s long tradition of support and involvement for this organization.”

Shartsis received her J.D. in 1972 from University of California at Berkeley School of Law-Boalt Hall, where she was a member of the *California Law Review*. She also received her A.B. degree from U.C. Berkeley, 1969. An active participant in Boalt Hall Alumni activities, Shartsis served as President of the Alumni Association in 1994-95.

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