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**CITY BAR STATEMENT CONDEMNS ATTACKS ON DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
LAWYERS WHO REPRESENTED GUANTANAMO DETAINEES**

New York, March 8, 2010 – The following is a statement by New York City Bar President Patricia M. Hynes:

An unwarranted and shameful effort has recently been made to impugn the loyalty and professional integrity of Department of Justice lawyers who, while in private practice, represented Guantanamo detainees, or filed amicus briefs in their support, in cases seeking to protect the rights of such detainees under the Constitution and laws of the United States. The Association of the Bar of the City of New York unequivocally condemns these attacks as an assault on our nation's most fundamental values and traditions and on the very notion of the rule of law itself. It is fundamental that all persons no matter how unpopular have a right to representation by counsel and that lawyers have a duty to provide such representation and to do so on a pro bono basis where such persons cannot afford counsel. These lawyers lived up to the highest standards of the Bar and of our nation's most cherished principles when they undertook these representations under the most difficult circumstances, at great personal sacrifice, and in fulfillment of their professional duties.

The suggestion made that doing so disqualifies these lawyers from representing the Department of Justice on any detainee or national security related matters reflects ignorance or a willful misrepresentation. The Attorney General has represented that these lawyers will recuse themselves in any individual case where they in fact have a conflict of interest. But they are no more disqualified from working on detainee or national security-related matters than lawyers who while in private practice defended large corporations in antitrust or securities law matters are disqualified from working in the Antitrust Division or the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Reflecting on his representation of British soldiers allegedly implicated in the Boston Massacre prior to the American Revolution, John Adams wrote in his diary that it was “one of the most gallant, generous and disinterested Actions of my whole Life, and one of the best Pieces of Service I ever rendered my country.” This nation owes the Justice Department lawyers the highest praise and gratitude for continuing the tradition exemplified by Adams and fulfilling the values it represents.

About the Association

The New York City Bar Association (www.nycbar.org), since its founding in 1870, has been dedicated to maintaining the high ethical standards of the profession, promoting reform of the law and providing service to the profession and the public. The Association continues to work for political, legal and social reform, while implementing innovative means to help the disadvantaged. Protecting the public's welfare remains one of the Association's highest priorities.