

**International Lawyers Association to Honor City Attorney
John Choi for Distinguished Public Service**

*National Joseph I. Mulligan, Jr. award recognizes significant achievement, inspiring ideas,
impeccable character*

SAINT PAUL – The International Municipal Lawyers Association (IMLA) will honor Saint Paul City Attorney John Choi with the 2009 Joseph I. Mulligan, Jr. Distinguished Public Service Award at its convention in October. Given annually, the prestigious award recognizes a local government attorney for significant and surpassing achievements in the field of local government law in the previous year.

“This award affirms what we already know – Saint Paul is truly fortunate to have a leader like John Choi heading the City Attorney’s office,” said Mayor Chris Coleman. “John is at the forefront with innovative ideas for the challenges we face. From his efforts to help prevent foreclosures, to his work to combat gangs, to developing an innovative driver diversion program, John looks at the big picture when it comes to public safety and criminal justice. He is always pushing to find solutions that will bring the greatest benefit to the community while decreasing the likelihood that offenders will re-offend. Congratulations to John on this well-deserved honor.”

The award recognizes Choi’s many accomplishments that benefit his international colleagues, including: developing local and national foreclosure strategies, including a ‘Multi-City Working Group on Foreclosures,’ a coalition of 20 cities nationwide to leverage municipal interest and explore joint legal strategies to hold lenders accountable; leading a community process to develop an implementation plan to improve opportunities for small and women- and minority-owned contractors; and working at the legislature to develop and implement public safety tools including: civil gang injunctions to combat criminal gang activity, and a driver diversion program to decrease the revolving door issue and provide drivers a responsible path to pay their fees and get their licenses reinstated.

In addition to these pioneering efforts, Choi initiated a data-driven approach to manage resources and evaluate results in his office.

“I am honored to be recognized for our efforts to find new ways to prevent foreclosures, gang violence and irresponsible property owners from wreaking havoc in our community,” said Choi. “While we must hold criminals accountable for the crimes they commit, as criminal justice professionals, we also have to constantly push for new ways to break the cycle of violence and reduce the likelihood that offenders will reoffend. The public’s safety and the future of our community depend on it.”

IMLA’s criteria for the award comprised a lengthy list of qualifications, including significant and surpassing achievements in the field of local government law that have occurred or culminated during the previous year and benefited all local government attorneys, both locally and nationally, as well as: brought new and inspiring ideas to IMLA’s national and international programs and activities; enhanced the image of the local government attorney both locally and nationally, especially in the courts at all levels; and demonstrated the personal characteristics of integrity, honesty, leadership, selflessness, dedication, tact, diplomacy, political acuity, and astuteness in dealing with the news media and the public.

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CAs City Attorney, Choi leads a public law agency and prosecution office of 70 employees with an \$8 million budget. Prior to his tenure with the City, Choi was a partner at Kennedy & Graven, a legal firm specializing in local government law, where he focused on government relations, administrative law, municipal law and civil litigation. Designated a “Super Lawyer” by Minnesota Law and Politics, he currently serves on the board of the Ramsey County Bar Association and the Public Law Section of the Minnesota State Bar Association. In addition, Choi volunteers in the community as a board member of several Saint Paul non-profits including: Sounds of Hope, St. Paul Youth Services and V.K. Arrigoni.

The International Municipal Lawyers Association is a non-profit professional organization dedicated to advancing the interests and education of local government lawyers. Since 1935, IMLA has been an advocate and resource for local government attorneys. IMLA champions the development of fair and realistic legal solutions, and assists members on the vast and cutting-edge legal issues facing local government lawyers today. Owned solely by over 2500 members across the United States and Canada, IMLA serves as an international clearing-house of legal information and cooperation on municipal legal matters. IMLA collects from and disseminates information to its members and helps governmental officials prepare for litigation and develop new local laws.

For more information on the International Municipal Lawyers Association, visit: <http://www.imla.org>.
For more information on the City Attorney’s Office, visit: <http://www.stpaul.gov/index.aspx?nid=67>.

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