LeGaL Foundation to Honor Evan Wolfson, Microsoft & Greg McCurdy

2013 LeGaL Community Vision Awards to be Presented
March 21 at LeGaL’s Annual Dinner

January 28, 2013 -- The LeGaL Foundation is pleased to announce that its 2013 Community Vision Awards will be presented at LeGaL’s Annual Dinner on March 21 to Evan Wolfson of Freedom to Marry & to the Microsoft Corporation / Greg McCurdy, Senior Policy Counsel at Microsoft.

LeGaL’s Community Vision Awards are presented annually to honor individuals or organizations with a distinguished record of service to the LGBT community, including a sustained commitment to achieving equal rights for all members of the LGBT community. LeGaL is proud to pay tribute to the accomplishments of this year’s recipients, which are summarized below.

Evan Wolfson is Founder and President of Freedom to Marry, the campaign to win marriage nationwide. He has been called “the godfather of gay marriage” by Newsweek / The Daily Beast, and “the indispensable man in bringing marriage equality to America” by Andrew Sullivan.

Wolfson contributed his expertise to the team in Baker v. Vermont, the Vermont Supreme Court ruling that led to the creation of “civil union,” a new legal marital status for same-sex couples, and to the Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders team in Goodridge v. Department of Public Health, which in 2004 led to the freedom to marry in Massachusetts. Wolfson has also played a part in work to win the freedom to marry in other nations, including Canada, Argentina, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia.

From 1989 until 2001, Wolfson worked full-time at Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund, the nation’s preeminent advocacy group working on behalf of gay and lesbian individuals. As director of Lambda Legal’s Marriage Project, Wolfson created the National Freedom to Marry Coalition and began leading the ongoing national marriage equality movement for equal marriage protections. He was co-counsel in Hawaii’s landmark Baehr case for the freedom to marry, which launched the current global marriage equality movement.

On April 26, 2000, Wolfson became the first Lambda attorney to argue before the United States Supreme Court when he urged the justices to reject the Boy Scouts of America’s appeal of a unanimous ruling from the New Jersey Supreme Court striking down their ban on gay members.
and leaders. Wolfson had represented Eagle Scout James Dale since he was expelled from the BSA in 1990. Following the 5-4 vote in favor of the Boy Scouts, Wolfson helped shape the extraordinary national response from non-gay and gay people and institutions against the BSA’s discrimination, challenging their harmful message to youth.

In other cases, Wolfson championed gay and lesbian military personnel fighting for the freedom to serve, gay parents wishing to adopt children and preserve their visitation rights, a Florida deputy sheriff fired for being gay, a person with AIDS seeking life-saving medical treatment refused to him by his insurer, a woman denied work as a Dallas police officer because of the state’s anti-gay “sodomy” laws, and NYC employees demanding equal health benefits and recognition for their partners.

Before joining Lambda, Wolfson served in Washington, D.C. as Associate Counsel to Lawrence Walsh in the Office of Independent Counsel (Iran/Contra), and in 1992, he served on the New York State Task Force on Sexual Harassment. Wolfson has taught as an adjunct professor of law at Columbia University and Rutgers University Law Schools, and served as a senior fellow at The New School’s Wolfson Center for National Affairs.

Wolfson has published numerous articles on sexual orientation and civil rights, beginning with his 1983 law school thesis on the freedom to marry for same-sex couples. As a pro bono cooperating attorney for Lambda Legal from 1984 to 1989, Wolfson wrote Lambda’s amicus briefs to the Supreme Court in *Bowers v. Hardwick* and *NGTF v. Board of Education of Oklahoma City*.

Born in Brooklyn and raised in Pittsburgh, Wolfson graduated from Yale College in 1978. For two years after graduation, he worked as a Peace Corps volunteer in a village in Togo, West Africa. Upon returning, he attended Harvard Law School, graduating in 1983 and moving on to teach political philosophy at Harvard College. Wolfson then served as assistant district attorney for Kings County in Brooklyn, NY. There, he wrote amicus briefs that helped win the U.S. Supreme Court’s ban on race discrimination in jury selection (*Batson v. Kentucky*) and the New York State high court’s elimination of the marital rape exemption (*People v. Liberta*).


In 2000, the National Law Journal honored Wolfson’s civil rights leadership by naming him one of the “100 most influential attorneys in America.” In 2004, Time magazine named him one of the “100 Most Influential People in the World.” In 2012, Wolfson was awarded the Barnard Medal of Distinction alongside President Barack Obama.

**Greg McCurdy** is the Senior Policy Counsel advising Microsoft’s US government affairs team on state legislation and policy. Throughout his career, Greg has been active in pro bono, policy and bar association work with an emphasis on antitrust and LGBT issues including LeGaL where he has been an active member over the last two decades and a leader in its In-House Corporate Counsel Committee.

In his current role at Microsoft, Greg advises the government affairs team that represents the company before the Governors, Attorneys General, and legislatures across 50 U.S. states on a wide range of commercial and other state law issues. Microsoft’s and Greg’s leadership on LGBT issues over the years contributed significantly to the recent success of Washington State legislation extending full marriage equality to same-sex couples. This was confirmed by a popular referendum in which Microsoft, its Chairman, CEO and General Counsel provided
Greg began his career as a paralegal in the Manhattan District Attorney’s office after graduating from Harvard University in 1987 where he studied history and government. After graduating from NYU Law School in 1991 Greg joined the litigation group at Milbank Tweed in New York City. In addition to cutting his teeth on shareholder and bankruptcy litigations, Greg first worked on marriage equality as pro bono counsel assisting Evan Wolfson who was then the trail blazing staff lawyer at Lambda Legal managing the Hawaii marriage litigation. While at Milbank Greg also became an early member of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York’s Committee on Gay Men and Lesbians in the Profession.

Given his strong interest in public service Greg left Milbank in 1994 to clerk for newly appointed U.S. District Judge Harold Baer, Jr. in the Southern District of New York. Greg later moved to Washington, DC to clerk for Chief Judge Harry T. Edwards of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. Greg returned to New York in 1996 and joined the litigation group at Proskauer Rose. In addition to commercial cases, Greg volunteered as pro bono counsel to the Service Members Legal Defense Fund representing gay Air Force doctors who had been discharged from the Air Force under the Don’t Ask Don’t Tell policy.

In January 2000, Greg joined Microsoft and moved to Paris to manage its litigation in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. During that time Greg also joined the International Bar Association and served, for a decade, as an officer and became co-chair of the Antitrust Committee.

In 2002, Greg returned to the U.S. to help Microsoft defend a series of antitrust actions. During his seven years in Seattle, Greg also managed e-discovery and other commercial cases for the company and again engaged with Lambda Legal joining its National Leadership Council. Greg also joined Microsoft’s pro bono litigation program and represented a political asylum seeker from Eritrea and later a gay Kenyan in the US immigration court in Seattle wining asylum for each.

In 2008, Greg was able to pursue his long-standing interests in policy and politics when the state government affairs team asked him to assume his current role. In his personal time, Greg was also very active in fundraising for the reelection of President Obama in New York and as a volunteer for the 2008 Obama campaign in Seattle. Greg lives on the Upper West Side with his partner, Adrian Rodriguez.

The Microsoft Corporation has consistently been a leader in adopting corporate policies to protect the rights of its LGBT employees and providing strong community support:

- In 1989, Microsoft became one of the first major U.S. companies to include sexual orientation in its antidiscrimination policy, and in 1993 it became one of the first such companies to provide domestic partner benefits to employees.

- In 2005, based in part on the company’s endorsement of prior legislation to protect the rights of LGBT persons, Microsoft was described by the *New York Times* as being “at the forefront of corporate gay rights for decades.”

- Since 2006, Microsoft has received the highest score possible under the Human Rights Campaign’s Corporate Equality Index.

Microsoft’s efforts to end discrimination based on sexual orientation have extended beyond its corporate practices to include endorsement of and financial support for public initiatives that would benefit the company and its workforce. The company’s public stance and financial
support have put Microsoft at the forefront of efforts to eliminate the gap in human rights between heterosexual and LGBT persons.

*LeGaL’s March 21 Annual Dinner will be held in New York City at the Ritz-Carlton Battery Park from 6:00-10:30 in the evening. For more information on the event, including sponsorship & ticket information, please visit our website at le-gal.org or e-mail us at info@le-gal.org.*

**About LeGaL - The LGBT Bar Association of Greater New York | The LeGaL Foundation**

LeGaL was one of the nation's first bar associations of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) legal community and remains one of the largest and most active organizations of its kind in the country. Serving the New York metropolitan area, LeGaL is dedicated to improving the administration of the law, ensuring full equality for members of the LGBT community and promoting the expertise and advancement of LGBT legal professionals.

Through the LeGaL Foundation, the organization publishes *Lesbian/Gay Law Notes*, the most comprehensive monthly publication summarizing legal & legislative developments affecting the LGBT community here and abroad, conducts a weekly walk-in pro bono clinic at Manhattan's LGBT Community Center serving hundreds of individuals each year, a monthly clinic on Long Island, a twice monthly clinic in Brooklyn, a collaborative Life Planning Clinic with NYLAG's LGBT Law Project, sponsors the Dr. M.L. Hank Henry, Jr. Fund for Judicial Fellowships and, among its many other activities, runs the area's only career fair dedicated to first-year LGBT law students.

For more information on LeGaL & its annual dinner, visit [http://le-gal.org](http://le-gal.org).