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State Honors Ishbel Dickens of Columbia Legal Services, Seattle

SPOKANE, Wash.—Sept. 11, 2007—Ishbel Dickens was honored last night by the State of Washington for years of service to the mission of providing affordable housing for the benefit of Washington residents. In an awards ceremony at the Davenport Hotel in Spokane that was part of the annual Housing Washington conference attended by more than 700 peers and colleagues, Ms. Dickens received a 2007 *Friend of Housing* award from the Washington State Housing Finance Commission.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of manufactured home owners throughout Washington state have benefited from Ms. Dickens' leadership and expertise. She has helped many form home owners' associations, educated others about their rights and responsibilities under the Mobile Home Landlord Tenant Act, and helped others preserve their manufactured housing communities - all the while maintaining a sense of professionalism, integrity, and compassionate understanding towards her clients.

She has been the subject of a documentary. She has written articles for legal journals. And she has been recognized with two different awards: In 2002 she was the UW Law School Charles Z. Smith Public Service Award recipient, and she also received the 1999 Seattle Human Services Coalition Excellence in Advocacy Award.

“I will not say this is Ishbel's crowning achievement, because Ishbel will have many more. But, I will say that the recently-passed House Bill 1461 is another feather we can put in Ishbel's cap” said Housing Finance Commissioner Mario Villanueva who presented Ms. Dickens with her Friend of Housing for Individual Achievement award. This legislation allows park residents to call on the Attorney General's office to resolve disputes concerning violations of the manufactured housing landlord-tenant act. It has

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been hailed as a nationwide model for manufactured housing landlord-tenant legislation. It comes on the heels of six years of hard work on the part of Ms. Dickens and other legal service and housing advocates.

Ms. Dickens advocacy began 20 years ago as an activist volunteer, collecting signatures to stop Costco from purchasing a mobile home park in North Seattle. She went on to work for the Low Income Housing Institute where she learned about affordable and manufactured housing issues. She then obtained a Juris Doctor from the University of Washington Law School while continuing being an activist and advocate on mobile home issues across the state.

The nonprofit Columbia Legal Services, specializing in manufactured and mobile home park preservation issues, brought her on board, and she has never stop advocating and traveling nationwide to speak on manufactured housing issues.

In his nominating letter Representative Brian Sullivan wrote, “I have known Ishbel for several years but came to really appreciate her passion for helping manufactured home owners as she worked both in front of, and behind the scenes, to help preserve two manufactured housing communities in Lynnwood last year. Ishbel was instrumental in securing the purchase of these parks by the Housing Authority of Snohomish County.”

The Commission received a record 49 nominations for the *Friend of Housing* awards from people working in the public, private and independent sectors of the affordable housing industry. Honorees are selected for their leadership and exceptional contribution to creating or supporting affordable housing, implementing housing-related programs, creating innovative financing mechanisms for housing, supporting homebuyer education or technical training efforts within the housing community and helping to solve housing problems.

Washington State Housing Finance Commission is a publicly accountable, self-supporting agency dedicated to increasing housing access and affordability and to expanding the availability of quality community services for Washington state residents.

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