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AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION COMMISSION ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CONFERS THE *2011 SHARON L. CORBITT AWARD*

Washington, D.C., July 11, 2011 – The American Bar Association Commission on Domestic Violence has selected attorney Rob (Roberta) Valente as the recipient of the *2011 Sharon L. Corbitt Award*. The commission created this award in 2008 to recognize service by lawyers from all areas of practice — including those from non-profits and large firms, as well as solo practitioners, corporate counsel and judges — who demonstrate exemplary service to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and/or stalking, in the spirit of Sharon L. Corbitt.

Corbitt was an active member of the ABA for 25 years, serving as a member of the Commission on Domestic Violence from 2002-2005 after completing her term as chair of the ABA Family Law Section. In honor of her exemplary professional and personal contributions to victims of domestic violence throughout her career, the award recognizes a lawyer each year who embodies her spirit and dedication.

Valente works with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges providing legal analysis on issues in the domestic violence field, with specialized interests in protection order enforcement, child custody issues, federal laws and interventions, and tribal issues relating to domestic violence.

Previously, Valente served as general counsel to the National Network to End Domestic Violence. In that capacity, Valente was one of the lead national coordinators of legislative work to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act.

Anne Menard, director of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, stated: “Rob played a central role in framing, drafting and passage of several critical pieces of legislation, including the reauthorizations of the Violence Against Women Act in 2000, 2005 and upcoming 2011. She has been a steadfast advocate for the need for increased legal assistance for victims of domestic violence, and played a key role in development of the Legal Assistance to Victims Program in VAWA.” Menard continued speaking to Valente’s experience and passion, “She cares deeply about the law and access to justice. She is articulate on not only the letter of the law, but also its rationale, its limitations, and its meaning to and impacts on the lives of victims of domestic violence.”

From 2006 to 2008, Valente was assistant director of the Family Violence Department of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Prior to that, she served as a consultant on civil legal issues regarding domestic violence for various organizations, including the Alaska Native Women's Coalition, the National Congress of American Indians and the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence. She also served as attorney advisor to the Office on Violence Against Women of the U.S. Department of Justice. In each of these roles, Valente has helped to improve legal response to domestic violence and increase access to justice for all survivors of domestic violence. Notably, Valente was the first director of the ABA Commission on Domestic Violence in 1994 and served in that capacity until 1998.

Commission Chair Debbie Segal of Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP stated: "I was privileged to be a member of the ABA Commission on Domestic Violence during the time that Rob served as its first staff director. I was inspired then by her commitment and passion, and have followed her career with the greatest admiration. She is a most exceptional advocate. It is a great honor for me, as chair, to now present her with the *Sharon Corbitt Award*."

The awards ceremony and breakfast reception will take place Aug. 5, from 9-10:30 a.m., during the ABA Annual Meeting at the InterContinental Hotel Yorkville, Toronto.

With nearly 400,000 members, the American Bar Association is the largest voluntary professional membership organization in the world. As the national voice of the legal profession, the ABA works to improve the administration of justice, promotes programs that assist lawyers and judges in their work, accredits law schools, provides continuing legal education, and works to build public understanding around the world of the importance of the rule of law.

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