U.S. Senator Cory Booker, Arnold & Porter LLP to be honored as Champions of Equal Justice

WASHINGTON, DC - On Thursday, October 29, the Southern Center for Human Rights (SCHR) will host its 19th annual Frederick Douglass Awards Dinner, the signature fundraiser of the Atlanta based organization. At the Awards dinner, SCHR will pay tribute to champions of equal justice who strive to transform our criminal justice system through civil rights advocacy and litigation.

SCHR is thrilled to present the 2015 Frederick Douglass Human Rights Award to United States Senator Cory Booker in recognition of his courageous advocacy for human rights and his continued leadership on criminal justice reform.

“I’m honored to join the Southern Center for Human Rights next month to discuss our shared dedication to healing the wounds inflicted by America’s broken criminal justice system,” Booker said. “SCHR has long been at the forefront of this fight, and it is my hope that the growing consensus for change seen across the political spectrum will soon result in reforms that will benefit our country for generations to come.”

The Frederick Douglass Equal Justice Award will be presented to Arnold & Porter LLP in honor of the firm’s historic pro bono efforts to affirm the right to counsel for adults and children accused of crimes from Gideon v Wainwright (1963) to N.P. v Georgia (2015).

“The Southern Center for Human Rights has been a dedicated advocate for the unrepresented and disenfranchised persons who need a lawyer’s helping hand the most. It’s in this tradition that our firm has likewise taken on many cases and causes others shied away from,” said David P. Gersch, of Arnold & Porter LLP.

As awardees, Senator Booker and Arnold & Porter LLP join a prestigious group of organizations and individuals whom SCHR has honored for their exceptional courage and tenacity in defending human rights and equal justice. Previous honorees include Congressman John Lewis; Debo Adegbile; former Solicitor General Seth Waxman for his successful advocacy striking down the death penalty for juveniles; present-Solicitor General Donald Verrilli for his pro bono representation of people in capital cases; New York Times columnist and author of Gideon’s Trumpet Anthony Lewis; and the Public Defender Service of the District of Columbia for its representation of indigent defendants in Washington, D.C.

Since 1976, the Southern Center for Human Rights (SCHR), based in Atlanta, has represented people facing the death penalty, challenged human rights violations in prisons and jails, and advocated for criminal justice system reforms on behalf of those affected by the system in the Southern United States. SCHR’s efforts have been aimed at enhancing equality, dignity, justice and fairness throughout the criminal justice system, particularly with regard to the death penalty.

The Frederick Douglass Awards Dinner will be held at the Marriott Marquis, 901 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC 20001. A cocktail reception begins at 6:00 pm, with dinner and remarks commencing at 7:00 pm.

Members of the press are encouraged to attend this event. Please RSVP no later than October 19, 2015 by contacting Terrica Ganzy, at 404-688-1202 or tganzy@schr.org

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