

## Lambda Legal Honors Eric Webber at 2013 West Coast Liberty Awards

Hosted by Lance Bass, the Annual Celebration also Commemorates Lambda Legal's 40 Years Making the Case for Equality

(Los Angeles – May 10, 2013) –Lambda Legal announced today that it will honor **Eric Webber**, immediate past president of the Los Angeles County Bar Association (LACBA), at its 21<sup>st</sup> Annual West Coast Liberty Awards. Webber is being recognized for his tireless advocacy for LGBT individuals in the legal profession that began 30 years ago when he was a law student at the University of Chicago.

Also being honored are *The New Normal's* **Justin Bartha**, recipient of a *Celebrity in the Spotlight Award*, and the Magic Johnson Foundation. They and other honorees will join host Lance Bass as Lambda Legal celebrates 40 years of making the case for equality at the London Hotel in West Hollywood on Thursday, June 13.

"Eric Webber has long been a trailblazer for LGBT professionals, especially in the legal profession," said Lambda Legal Executive Director Kevin Cathcart. "Beginning as a first-year law student at the University of Chicago in 1984, Eric started the University of Chicago's Lesbian & Gay Law Students Association, now known as OUTLaw. Three years later, he organized the first major national academic conference focused exclusively on LGBT legal issues in 1987. And, most recently, Eric served as the first openly gay president of the Los Angeles County Bar Association (LACBA). Many LGBT lawyers today owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Eric's tireless work promoting their interests."

Webber is a partner in the Los Angeles office of the law firm Irell & Manella LLP, specializing in mergers and acquisitions, corporate finance and other complex business transactions. He has led legal teams on deals ranging in value from under \$5 million to about \$5 billion.

Webber was co-president of the Lesbian & Gay Lawyers Association of Los Angeles (LGLA) in 1992 and drafted LACBA's ground-breaking 1994 report on sexual orientation bias in the Los Angeles legal profession. He served as the first chair of the State Bar of California's Committee on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Discrimination (CSOGID). Webber has also been a Lambda Legal member since law school, is a past member of Lambda Legal's national Board of Directors and is currently a member of its National Leadership Council (NLC).

The 2013 West Coast Liberty Awards, hosted by out actor and recording artist Lance Bass, will be held Thursday, June 13, 2013, from 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm at the London West Hollywood Hotel, 1020 North San Vicente Blvd., West Hollywood, CA, 90068. For ticket information, please visit [www.lambdalegal.org/wcla13](http://www.lambdalegal.org/wcla13).

### NEWS RELEASE

[www.lambdalegal.org](http://www.lambdalegal.org)

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Lambda Legal is a national organization committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and those with HIV through impact litigation, education and public policy work.



This year's celebration will also commemorate Lambda Legal's 40 years making the case for equality, growing from its modest beginnings operating out of a founder's apartment in New York City to becoming the country's most prominent and powerful LGBT legal organization. During the time, Lambda Legal has won some of the most important legal victories for the LGBT community, including *Romer v. Evans*, which blocked a Colorado voter initiative that would have stripped lesbians and gay men of civil rights protection, and *Lawrence v. Texas*, which struck down all remaining state sodomy laws. This year's celebration will also mark the launch of the ***Celebrity in the Spotlight Award***, created to recognize LGBT individuals and supporters in the entertainment business for their advocacy on behalf of equality for all.

Located in Los Angeles, the Western Regional Office (WRO) anchors Lambda Legal's operations throughout the Western United States. The WRO is Lambda Legal's oldest and largest regional office, and boasts a docket as diverse as the territory it covers, with cases advancing legal protections for gay youth, advocating for the freedom to marry, defending domestic partner benefits, challenging discriminatory police policies, and fighting for fair treatment of people with HIV.

The annual Liberty Awards honor heroes who have made strides in the fight for full recognition of the civil rights of the LGBT community and of those with HIV. Over the past two decades, the Liberty Awards have honored corporations, law firms, and individuals whose work exemplifies the highest standards of service and commitment to the LGBT community. Past recipients include now-retired California Supreme Court Associate Justice Carlos R. Moreno, then-San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, Rosie & Kelli O'Donnell, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Martina Navratilova, Alan Cumming, Herb Ritts, Bill Jones, Margaret Cho, Dolores Huerta, Kathy Griffin and then-State Senator Sheila Kuehl.

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