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## **Office of the City Attorney Honored Twice with Diversity Award and Prize for Outstanding Publication in Community Report Card**

(Oakland, CA) –The award-winning Office of the City Attorney was honored yet again yesterday at the California Minority Counsel Program’s (CMCP) 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference with the John Essex and Guy Rousanville Jr. In-House Counsel Diversity Award. The CMCP is a membership organization with nearly 2000 individual members and 251 corporate/ organizational members. The CMCP’s central mission is maximizing opportunities for women attorneys and attorneys of color.

The award was based on an organization’s minority representation, the record of hiring diverse outside counsel and an overall organizational culture that values diversity and gives back to the community. The Office of the City Attorney (OCA) in Oakland has a staff with 62% minorities and 73% women. It was the first time in the CMCP’s history that a public agency had been honored with the award.

Over 250 people attended the luncheon award ceremony in San Francisco where Oakland City Attorney John Russo accepted the award. “It’s an honor to be recognized not only for who we are,” said City Attorney Russo, “but for what we do.” The OCA was acknowledged for its work to defend Oakland’s landmark anti-predatory mortgage lending ordinance, the creation of the Neighborhood Law Corp--a cadre of public service lawyers who help fight blight, drug activity and substandard housing, and the campaign to punish hate crimes using California civil codes.

“We take very seriously our office motto: Jus Pro Populo – Law in Service to the Public,” said Russo. “And our commitment to diversity is demonstrated by our work to initiate legal programs and support local laws that promote inclusion and fight discrimination.”

In addition, in late October of this year, the Office of the City Attorney was also given an Award of Excellence for the Office of the City Attorney’s *Community Report Card for Fiscal Year 2002-03* by the Legal Marketing Association Bay Area Chapter. The *Community Report Card* is an annual publication detailing how tax dollars are spent in delivery of legal services. The association of legal marketing professionals singled out the Oakland publication over dozens of private law firms as “an outstanding way to convey information to the public.”

In the past year, the Office of the City Attorney received national and state recognition for its work in open government, distinguished public service, commitment to local democracy and diversity as well as recognition for outstanding, professional publications.