New Directions Celebrates Five Years of Helping Attorneys Return to Practice
Landmark program remains one of only lawyer re-entry programs today

WHITE PLAINS, NY, June 21, 2011–The New Directions for Attorneys program at Pace Law School, in collaboration with the Westchester Women’s Bar Association, is celebrating its fifth year of helping admitted attorneys return to practice after time away. One of the first programs of its kind in the country, New Directions remains one of the only lawyer re-entry programs in existence today. Since its inception in 2007, it has provided more than 100 participants from around the Tri-State Area and beyond with substantive education, practical tools, and experience necessary to re-enter the legal profession or transition within it.

New Directions staff, alumni and other supporters will celebrate five years of service to the legal community with a reception on June 29, from 6-8 p.m., at the Judicial Institute on the Pace Law School Campus, 78 North Broadway, White Plains, NY. Program staff and alumni will be available to speak to the media about the impact New Directions has had on their careers and their lives. Please see the testimonials from alumni below.

*Reporters wishing to attend the reception should notify Lauren Rubenstein, manager of media relations, in advance at (914) 422-4389 or lrubenstein@law.pace.edu.

New Directions serves both men and women who earned law degrees, in addition to those who either never practiced law or spent time away from the profession. While many New Directions participants are mothers looking to return to law practice after raising their children, others pursued a non-legal career path, such as journalism or human resources, and seek to resume a legal career. On average, participants are seven or more years removed from law practice. Most participants come from around the Tri-State area, though some have hailed from as far as Pennsylvania, Maryland and California.

Since holding its first session of 13 men and women in 2007, New Directions has grown and improved, adding more career workshops, expanding its legal research and writing component, and significantly increasing the number of organizations that serve as externship sponsors. Two sessions are now held each year; one in Westchester, the other in New York City. The name of the program was recently changed from New Directions: Practical Skills for Returning to Law Practice to New Directions for Attorneys to reflect the growing number of participants seeking to explore an alternative legal career using their newly refreshed skills. While the program’s original mission of helping attorneys to reclaim professional identity and confidence continues today, since the economy declined in 2008, there has been an increased number of transitioning attorneys who have participated in the program.

New Directions has been featured in the New York Times, the New York Law Journal, CNN, Law360 and U.S. News & World Report, among many others. This year, the New Directions staff received Pace University’s “Outstanding Contribution Team Award” for demonstrating commitment to the goals and
values necessary to enhance the University’s learning and working environment. More information about New Directions is available on its website.

Please contact Lauren Rubenstein, manager of media relations, at (914) 422-4389, or Amy Gewirtz, director of New Directions, at (914) 422-4606, for additional information about New Directions.

New Directions Alumni Testimonials

“I would not have been able to return to the workforce without New Directions. The program enabled me to dust off my legal and professional skills and to instill in me the confidence I needed to get back to work. It provided me with current work experience through the externship, continuing legal education, career counseling, role models and mentors, and all the other tools I needed in order to re-enter today’s changing and challenging job market. After 14 years as a full-time stay-at-home mother, I had lost my professional bearings. New Directions gave me a compass and set me on the right course, professionally and personally.”

-Kathy Hecht, New Jersey

"After I spent over a decade raising a family and being an active community member, it was New Directions that gave me the confidence and helped me obtain the credentials to return to fulfilling employment as an attorney. Essentially the training and contacts provided by New Directions gave me access to a volunteer position which in turn allowed me to develop experience and additional personal contacts without which I could not have competed successfully for my current job. Notably, I learned of the availability of my current position from a posting put up by New Directions for its graduates on Linked In!"

-Beth Propper, Westchester County

I knew I wanted to restart my career, but after having spent 9 years at home raising my children, I felt I no longer had the resources and confidence to do so. New Directions provided me with important skills, contacts and experiences, without which I would not have had the confidence to pursue my current position at a law firm. Also, through my externship I discovered a new area of law that I have incorporated into my practice. I highly recommend New Directions!

-Debra Stewart, Westchester County

New Directions Externship Sponsor Testimonial

Sikorsky is delighted to be an externship sponsor in the New Directions program. We are pleased to have three program participants externing with us currently, as well as two alumna working here as full-time employees. Sikorsky looks forward to continuing our association with the New Directions program.

- Peter J. Graber-Lipperman, Vice President & General Counsel, Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation
History of the Program

2007: *New Directions* holds its first session with 13 participants (12 women and 1 man). The curriculum focuses on family and matrimonial law and runs only once, from May through November.

2008: The class size jumps to 34 participants in a session running from May through November. The curriculum focus is “Training General Counsel.”

2009: The program begins running twice each calendar year, in order to have smaller groups to foster more collegiality and support among participants, and allow for more individualized career counseling. The January session runs in Westchester, and, for the first time, a session is held in July at the Pace Midtown Center in New York City. The curriculum becomes more general and allows for flexibility depending on the legal market. The core legal writing and research, as well as externship, 24 NYS CLE credits, and career counseling component all remain.

2011: Beginning in the January session, the substantive learning part of the program is changed to allow participants to take more electives. Participants take four CLE classes through Pace Law School on subjects of their choosing.

**Upcoming July 2011 session:** Participants will be able to take Pace Law School CLE classes for one year from the start date of their session. Six of the classes must be completed by the end of their session on Dec. 16. This will allow participants to create a more individualized program, while at the same time, coming together as a group for other substantive classes and career workshops.