



For immediate release
Jan. 30, 2007

Contact: Mary Allen, public relations officer
Office: 302-477-2175, Cell: 302-562-9239

Widener Law clinic opens new office *Focus is on serving the indigent and underrepresented*

Widener University School of Law is pleased to announce it will formally open its new offices for the Harrisburg Civil Law Clinic on Monday, **Feb. 5 from 4 to 6 p.m.** The event will feature a ribbon cutting at 5 p.m., along with remarks by Samuel T. Cooper III, Esq., of Eckert Seamans in Harrisburg, who chairs the Pennsylvania Bar Association Diversity Committee and serves on the association's Board of Governors. The public is welcome to attend.

The new clinic office is located on the second floor of the office building at 3605 Vartan Way. The media is encouraged to attend the opening and see the new space so that the public can be informed of the change. The opening also presents an ideal time to educate the public on the tremendous community service available through the clinic.

It provides a vital service to people in need who require legal assistance but do not have the financial means to pay for an attorney. Students represent real clients and gain invaluable educational experience meeting with them, preparing documents for their cases and arguing on the clients' behalves in court. Clients get quality representation they could otherwise not afford. The cases vary from domestic and family law matters to landlord-tenant disputes to consumer cases.

The clinic had been located at 2300 Vartan Way for the last five years, but that 1,700 square feet of space had grown cramped. The office houses five staff members, including three attorneys who oversee the students. This semester more than 20 students are enrolled to work in the clinic and the new office has nearly doubled the amount of space available to the program. The new location is also located within walking distance to the Widener Law campus, making it convenient for students and professors.

The 16-year-old clinic has served roughly 2,645 clients since its opening. The majority of the cases are referred from MidPenn Legal Services, Dauphin County Area Agency on Aging, YWCA Domestic Violence Legal Clinic, Dauphin County Court, the Department of Labor and Industry Job Center and the Community Action Commission. Other referring agencies have included the St. Francis Soup Kitchen, the Lebanon Veterans Administration Hospital's homeless program and the Fair Housing Commission.

"The clinic is a point of pride for Widener's Harrisburg campus and this new location will allow us the additional office, research and meeting space we need to continue doing the professional job the community has come to rely upon," said J. Palmer Lockard II, associate law professor and director of the clinic. "We look forward to watching our program grow and continuing to make a difference in the lives of Pennsylvanians."

The clinic phone number remains unchanged at 717.541.0320.

###