

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**EQUALITY ILLINOIS HONORS MCDERMOTT WILL &  
EMERY WITH 2012 BUSINESS LEADERSHIP AWARD**

CHICAGO – Equality Illinois, the state's oldest and largest organization advocating for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) equality, announced today that its 2012 Business Leadership Award will be presented to McDermott Will & Emery, one of the country's leading law firms working to end discrimination and fighting for LGBT equality in courtrooms worldwide.

“McDermott Will & Emery consistently leads the corporate world in LGBT workplace equality, and we are proud to honor their work with this year's Business Leadership Award,” Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois, said. “In Illinois alone, McDermott worked to ensure that gay and lesbian couples could file their state tax returns jointly, prepared legal briefs on harms suffered by LGBT individuals, and drafted legal tools on issues surrounding civil unions.”

McDermott Will & Emery is a premier international law firm with over 1,000 attorneys based in sixteen offices spanning the globe. Established in 1934 as a tax practice in Chicago, McDermott has grown its core practices and offices around the world. McDermott has a long history of social responsibility and supporting the communities in which their offices are based through pro bono work, community service, charitable giving, environmental stewardship, and promoting diversity. The firm has been recognized by Equality Illinois as a leading law firm for LGBT workplace equality for several years in a row in its annual *Raising the Bar* survey.

“We are humbled and honored to be receiving this prestigious award,” said Jeffrey E. Stone, co-chair of McDermott Will & Emery, based in Chicago. “Equality Illinois continues to make huge strides in the effort to secure equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in this state, and to be recognized by this organization with this prestigious award is very gratifying. We are proud of our work in providing pro bono assistance to EQIL on multiple fronts, most recently in collaborating alongside EQIL to work with the Illinois Department of Revenue to change its position concerning the taxation of civil union partners. We are equally pleased to receive EQIL's recognition for our work in creating and maintaining a diverse and inclusive workplace for all LGBT attorneys and employees. We look forward to strengthening our relationship with EQIL in the years to come.”

The Business Leadership Award is given annually to firms that demonstrate remarkable vision, courage, and leadership in the effort to achieve full equality for LGBT individuals in Illinois. The 2012 Business Leadership Award will be presented at Equality Illinois' *Justice for All* Gala, which is scheduled to take place on Saturday, February 11, at the Hilton Chicago. Past Business Leadership Award recipients include AT&T, Kraft, Walgreens, and Motorola.

For more information about Equality Illinois' *Justice for All* gala, please visit [www.eqil.org](http://www.eqil.org). Equality Illinois was founded in 1991 to secure, protect and defend full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals. It is the state's oldest and largest LGBT advocacy organization.

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