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BERNADETTE D'SOUZA QUALIFIES IN HISTORIC ELECTION TO CHOOSE NEW ORLEANS' FIRST FAMILY COURT JUDGE

NEW ORLEANS – Today, Attorney Bernadette D'Souza qualified for Civil District Court – Domestic Section 1, New Orleans' first permanent family court seat. Ms. D'Souza has been a passionate and longtime supporter of a permanently dedicated Family Court for New Orleans and has devoted her legal career to the practice of family law, serving the public interest for over 18 years, many of them as Managing Attorney of the Family Law Unit at New Orleans Legal Assistance Corporation (NOLAC) and Southeast Louisiana Legal Services (SLLS).

For her professionalism, unique expertise and commitment to public service, Ms. D'Souza has been recognized numerous times by her peers as one of our foremost practitioners of family law. She was honored as a New Orleans' CityBusiness Woman of the Year for 2011, is a recipient of the Louisiana State Bar's Career Public Interest Award and Association of Women Attorneys' Wynne Professionalism Award.

Ms. D'Souza released this statement after qualifying:

“For many years, I have championed a first-class Family Court to best serve the needs of New Orleans families. I'm proud to be a candidate for this newly-created judgeship. I have devoted my professional life to seeking fairness and justice for families in need,” D'Souza said. “As New Orleans' first Family Court Judge, I look forward to using my experience in creating a specialized Family Court with the highest standards of accessibility, equality, and justice.”

Ms. D'Souza has already received support from several well-respected elected officials, including Orleans Parish Sheriff Marlin Gusman, Clerk of Court Dale Atkins, State Senators Karen Carter Peterson and Julie Quinn, Councilmember Susan Guidry, and State Representative Austin Badon. Her Campaign Committee is chaired by Sen. Peterson and Mr. Michael P. Arata. Her Finance Committee is chaired by Ms. Donna Klein and includes a diverse group of community leaders and professionals from across New Orleans.

About Civil District Court – Domestic Section 1:

The passage of Senate Bill 161 in the 2011 legislative session dedicated the next two Orleans Parish Civil District Court seats as permanent Family Court Sections. When Judge Herbert Cade won election to Traffic Court and resigned from Civil District Court, Domestic Section 1 replaced his vacant Civil District Court seat. The election for Domestic Section 1 was called by proclamation by Governor Bobby Jindal for March 24th, 2012.

About Bernadette D'Souza:

Bernadette D'Souza has been a practicing attorney in public interest law for over 18 years. She served as Managing Attorney for the Family Law Unit at New Orleans Legal Assistance Corporation and then at Southeast Louisiana Legal Services. She served as an adjunct Professor and Clinic Consultant at Tulane University Law School in Family and Domestic Violence Law. Ms. D'Souza has received numerous professional awards, including the Louisiana State Bar's Career Public Service Award, Association of Women Attorneys Wynne Professionalism Award, and the Victims & Citizens Against Crime “Sandy Krasnoff Citizen Hero” Award. She serves on the Louisiana Supreme Court's Self-Represented Litigants Task Force and the Committee on Bar Admissions – Character and Fitness. She is the former Chair of the New Orleans Bar Association's Family Law Committee and is currently a Fellow of the Louisiana Bar Foundation, where she also chairs the Development Committee. Ms. D'Souza is a 1992 Graduate of Tulane University Law School.

Ms. D'Souza has three grown children, Lloyd, Vanessa, and Christine, and is married to Dr. Terence D'Souza, a neurologist at Ochsner Clinic at Baptist and a former faculty member at Tulane University Medical School. More recently, they became proud grandparents of Aidan Michael DePetrillo. They are parishioners of Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church.

**PAID FOR BY THE COMMITTEE TO ELECT BERNADETTE D'SOUZA
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