



MACDL

Massachusetts Association of
Criminal Defense Lawyers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MACDL STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF HARVARD LAW SCHOOL PROFESSOR RONALD SULLIVAN

Boston, Mass. (May 13, 2019) — The Massachusetts Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (MACDL) opposes Harvard College's decision to end the tenure of Harvard Law School (HLS) Professor Ronald Sullivan and his wife, HLS Lecturer Stephanie Robinson, as faculty deans of Winthrop House following Professor Sullivan's decision to represent Harvey Weinstein, on a criminal charge of rape. MACDL calls on Harvard to reverse this decision.

MACDL's President, Derege Demissie, said Sunday, "A defense lawyer should never face adverse consequences for representing a person accused of a crime, no matter how reprehensible the crime or repugnant the person may be. Harvard should uphold the tradition set by one of its most distinguished graduates, John Adams, who defended the British soldiers accused of murder during the Boston Massacre."

A defendant's right to legal representation of his choice is a fundamental principle enshrined in the United States Constitution. The Sixth Amendment requires the assistance of counsel to present any defense, to raise any legal issues regarding the charges and government conduct, and to argue about appropriate punishment if convicted. Defense lawyers who choose to represent the most reviled defendants give this essential right life and meaning.

Professor Sullivan and Ms. Robinson were the first African-American faculty deans in Harvard's history. That they are now being removed under these circumstances speaks incredibly poorly of Harvard's commitment to due process, the rule of law, and racial equality, and should concern all of Harvard's students and faculty.

About MACDL

MACDL is the only statewide association of lawyers in Massachusetts devoted exclusively to serving all segments of the defense bar. According to its mission statement MACDL's mission is to preserve the adversary system of justice; to maintain and foster independent and able criminal defense lawyers and to ensure justice and due process for persons accused of a crime. MACDL will be an advocate for the advocate.

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