

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FINDING THAT HEALTH OUTREACH WORKER VICTORIA SCHNEIDER WAS UNLAWFULLY SUBJECTED TO A STRIP-SEARCH TO CONFIRM HER GENDER AT THE SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY JAIL ON JUNE 13, 1996, A FEDERAL JURY AWARDED HER \$750,000 FOR MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL PAIN AND SUFFERING, AND IMPOSED PUNITIVE DAMAGES OF \$5,000 AGAINST SF SHERIFF'S DEPUTY FRED LEW FOR HIS ROLE IN THE ILLEGAL SEARCH.

THE SEVEN-PERSON JURY, ACTING UNANIMOUSLY, FOUND THAT THE STRIP SEARCH OF MS. SCHNEIDER, WHO WAS ARRESTED FOR PROSTITUTION AND BOOKED INITIALLY AS A MALE, WAS A VIOLATION OF HER CIVIL AND CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS.

"I'M JUST HAPPY THAT THE JURY BELIEVED I WAS TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO ME THAT NIGHT," SCHNEIDER SAID. "I'VE BEEN TELLING THE CITY FOR TWO YEARS THAT THIS HAPPENED, BUT THEY REFUSED TO BELIEVE ME . BUT I TALKED TO THE JURORS AND THEY BELIEVED ME."

COMMENTED SCHNEIDER'S ATTORNEY KAREN SNELL, OF THE SAN FRANCISCO LAW FIRM OF CLARENCE & SNELL, "NOT ONLY DID THE JURY VINDICATE VICTORIA, BUT THEY SENT A CLEAR MESSAGE THAT UNLAWFUL SEARCHES IN THE JAIL WILL NOT BE TOLERATED."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CALL NANCI CLARENCE AT CLARENCE & SNELL, (415) 749-1800, OR JENNIFER RAKOWSKI AT COMMUNITY UNITED AGAINST VIOLENCE (415) 777-5500.