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ACLU of Utah Executive Director to Retire in 2016

Karen McCreary has dramatically grown and strengthened the high-profile organization over her nearly decade-long tenure

SALT LAKE CITY— ACLU of Utah Executive Director and long-time Salt Lake City community leader Karen McCreary has announced that she will retire at the end of June, 2016.

Since becoming the organization's head in 2006, McCreary has more than doubled the staff, overseen impressive fundraising growth, extended the ACLU of Utah's presence statewide, built a vigorous legal program, and greatly expanded the ACLU of Utah's influential participation at the Utah Legislature.

"The ACLU is like a second family to me; I feel a deep connection to our mission and to those with whom I'm fortunate enough to work," says McCreary. "It's been a privilege to work alongside so many wonderful people around the state to address civil liberties injustices with the belief that Utah can be a more just and inclusive place. I am so proud to have been a part of this amazing organization, which makes this a difficult decision for me. But it is important for me to have more time to spend with my immediate family, including my elderly parents who live out of state."

Under McCreary's leadership, the ACLU of Utah championed a successful legal challenge to Utah's Arizona-style anti-immigration law HB497, helped pass Utah's LGBT non-discrimination act and has successfully challenged governmental impediments to full marriage equality. The ACLU also played a critical role in Utah's sweeping criminal justice reform efforts and built grassroots community coalitions to advocate for racial justice throughout the state.

"We are so impressed with all that Karen has accomplished during her time as our Executive Director; she will be leaving the organization in great shape," says ACLU of Utah Board President Michael Weinholtz. "It will be a real challenge to replace Karen, but we are committed to upholding the incredible tradition of civil liberties progress and protection by the ACLU of Utah."

The Board of Directors plans to begin recruiting for McCreary's replacement in February.

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The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is the nation's largest non-partisan guardian of freedom with more than 500,000 members and supporters and affiliate or national chapter offices in all fifty states and Puerto Rico. Founded in 1920, the ACLU works tirelessly to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties guaranteed to all people in this country by both the Constitution and the laws of the United States.

The ACLU of Utah, chartered in 1958, operates through public education, legal advocacy, litigation, and lobbying at both the state and local levels to ensure the constitutional rights and freedoms of everyone living in or visiting Utah. Our work is based on those principals outlined in the Bill of Rights and our priorities include: Participatory Democracy; Racial Justice; Immigrants' Rights; Religious Liberty & Freedom of Belief; and Privacy & Technology. In addition, we continue our commitment to reform the Utah criminal justice system, protect the First Amendment, reproductive freedoms, and equality for all.