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*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

Phil Desgranges Named Attorney-in-Charge of Law Reform for Legal Aid's Criminal Defense Practice

(NEW YORK, NY) - The Legal Aid Society today announced the [appointment of Phil Desgranges](#) to attorney-in-charge of the Criminal Defense Practice's [Law Reform team](#), which includes the Special Litigation Unit, Prisoners' Rights Project, Policy Unit, Community Justice Unit, Decarceration Project, and Incarcerated Client Services Unit.

In this role, Desgranges will lead a team of directors, supervising attorneys and other staff in working to develop and advance innovative impact litigation and policy reform initiatives, build and maintain coalitions with other community organizations and leaders, engage in public education and media advocacy, and collaborate with defenders to address the systemic legal issues affecting our public defense clients.

Desgranges previously served as a supervising attorney in the Special Litigation Unit of Legal Aid's Criminal Defense Practice, where he has led challenges to the city's practice of secretly taking and storing people's DNA and the state's mandatory detention of people accused of parole violations. Before coming to Legal Aid, Desgranges was a senior staff attorney at the New York Civil Liberties Union, where he led challenges to the use of solitary confinement for teenagers, bail practices that deprived people of their freedom solely because of their inability to pay bail, and a school district's practice of excluding newly arrived immigrants from high school.

"It is an honor to lead Legal Aid's Law Reform team, which has for decades championed innovative civil rights litigation and policy campaigns in defense of New York City's most vulnerable populations," said **Phil Desgranges, attorney-in-charge of the Law Reform team of The Legal Aid Society's Criminal Defense Practice**. "I look forward to working with the talented members of the Law Reform team to combat the systemic injustices low-income New Yorkers face today, including the humanitarian crisis at Rikers Island, the cycle of incarceration for people with mental health issues, abusive police practices, and more."

"Phil has years of experience advocating for and securing critical reforms to our criminal legal system, whether in the courtroom, City Hall or in Albany," said **Tina Luongo, chief attorney of the Criminal Defense Practice at The Legal Aid Society**. "From ensuring our incarcerated clients' access to medical care to holding the City to account for invasive DNA collection and storage practices, our clients and the communities we serve will continue to benefit with Phil leading the Criminal Defense Practice's law reform efforts in this new role."

“There is no better steward for the next stage of Legal Aid’s law reform mission than Phil Desgranges,” said **Corey Stoughton, outgoing attorney-in-charge of Legal Aid’s Law Reform team.** “Phil has long been a thought leader on issues of New York criminal legal reform and the talent behind some of Legal Aid’s most successful strategic initiatives. I could not be more excited to hand over leadership of this incredible team to someone of his caliber.”

[Phil Desgranges headshot](#) (credit: Spencer Gallop with The Legal Aid Society)

Biography:

Phil Desgranges is the attorney-in-charge of the Law Reform team of The Legal Aid Society’s Criminal Defense Practice. He was previously a supervising attorney in the Special Litigation Unit of Legal Aid’s Criminal Defense Practice, which specializes in civil rights impact litigation to address systemic legal issues affecting the rights of Legal Aid’s public defense clients. Desgranges is a member of the Board of Directors of the New York City Bar Association.

Before joining Legal Aid, Desgranges was a senior staff attorney at the New York Civil Liberties Union, where he focused on statewide civil rights and civil liberties impact litigation. Desgranges previously worked as an associate at Goodwin Procter LLP, where he litigated commercial matters and a wide range of pro bono matters, including a death penalty appeal. He also previously worked as a public defender at The Bronx Defenders, where he represented indigent clients at all stages of criminal proceedings, including trying cases to verdict.

Desgranges graduated cum laude from Boston University in 2006, and he graduated from New York University School of Law in 2009.

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The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For over 145 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities. <https://www.legalaidnyc.org>