



# Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Atlanta, Inc.

*Providing Help. Creating Hope.*

680 W. Peachtree St. NW, Atlanta, GA. 30308, Phone: (404) 881-6571. Fax: (404) 888-7816

[www.catholiccharitiesatlanta.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesatlanta.org)

## Press Release

**For immediate release**

**Date: March 2, 2007**

**Phone: (404) 885-7238**

**for more information please contact:**

**Jutta M. Hansen, PR Coordinator**

**[jhansen@archatl.com](mailto:jhansen@archatl.com)**

### **Atlanta, GA. March 2, 2007... EMORY PUBLIC INTEREST COMMITTEE (EPIC) bestows the 2007 "Unsung Hero" Inspiration Award to Sue Colussy, Program Director for Immigration Services at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Atlanta.**

On February 13, 2007 during their annual award celebration, the Emory School of Law Public Interest Committee (EPIC) presented an Inspiration Award for: "Unsung Devotion to Those Most in Need" to Mrs. Susan H. Colussy, Program Director for Immigration Services at Catholic Charities in Atlanta.

The Emory Public Interest Committee (EPIC) is a student led group at Emory School of Law, who aim to further the highest service in the field of public interest law. Students pursuing careers in public interest law find their ideals in the rights and laws that protect social justice and vulnerable populations. Commitment to public service in this realm of jurisprudence, especially protecting those without a voice and those in need, is the ideal and theme for the award winners chosen for the 2007 EPIC award.



Mrs. Colussy is the 2007 recipient of this prestigious inspiration award:

"Unsung Devotion to Those Most in Need." Sue Colussy has served Catholic Charities for 21 dedicated years. Her passion for practicing immigration law is inspired by the need of the unheard unfortunates of society, the helpless foreign children sold into modern-day slavery, the victims of torture and trafficking, and many vulnerable individuals in need of protection. A true champion of justice and defender of equal rights, Sue is an example to aspiring graduate students at Emory School of Law and has thus been honored with this year's inspiration award.

Sue began practicing at Catholic Charities when it was the only pro bono provider in the 4 state region of the Atlanta Immigration Court. She began programs that still operate to serve abused spouses and children of citizens or residents. She obtained funds from the State Bar Foundation to begin service for aliens detained by the immigration service and unable to afford counsel. Last year over 800 detainees had contact with that service. She began a program of "rights presentations" and representation for children in immigration service custody which has just been selected for an Equal Justice fellowship. Her most recent effort is the launching of the Atlanta Bar Asylum Project, a pro bono project of some of Atlanta's largest law firms, currently housed at Catholic Charities. Her staff also provides asylum representation for clients of the Center for trauma and Torture Survivors.

Sue has served formally as a mentor to students from the clinical programs of Georgia's law schools, teaching them the intricacies of Immigration Law. She has also been a highly valued member of the immigration bar in Atlanta, serving on numerous committees. She is also frequently asked to serve as a speaker at local and national events on immigration matters and has been a conference presenter at national meetings of the American Immigration Lawyer's association and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network.

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On **May 5, 2006** during the annual Atlanta Bar Association Award Breakfast Sue Colussy received the **2006 Liberty Bell Award** for outstanding service to the community by strengthening the American system of freedom under the law. This award gives public recognition to men and women, also non-lawyers, for outstanding service in promoting a better understanding of our Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

In **2004**, Mrs. Colussy was honored with the American Immigration Lawyers Association's (AILA) **Sam Williamson Mentor Award** for outstanding efforts and excellent counsel to immigration attorneys by providing mentoring assistance.

In **2002**, Sue Colussy was awarded the **Phoenix Award** by Mayor Shirley Franklin for 17 years of dedicated service working for Catholic Charities, practicing immigration law for the benefit of those most in need and the most vulnerable in the Metro Atlanta communities.

In **2001** the State Bar of Georgia presented Mrs. Colussy with the **William B. Spann Award** for pro bono work with low income aliens. Catholic Charities is very proud of Sue Colussy's accomplishments over the years and her dedication to serve.

Catholic Charities (formerly called Catholic Social Services, Inc.) is the social service agency of the Archdiocese of Atlanta and North Georgia. In September 2003, the agency celebrated 50 years of service to over one million people, serving all clients regardless of religion or background, especially those most in need and most vulnerable. In January 2005, the agency achieved national accreditation through COA, the Council of Accreditation. The service programs include Crisis Pregnancy Counseling, Parenting Services, Adoptions, Psychological counseling for Individuals, Families, Children and groups, Housing Counseling, Information & Referral, English as a Second Language & Computer Classes, Direct Assistance, Katrina Evacuee Assistance, Senior Ministry, Prison Ministry Training, Legal & Immigration Services, Refugee Resettlement, and Parish & Social Justice Ministry. Community Outreach Centers include five locations in Gainesville, Athens, Dalton, Fulton/DeKalb, and Cobb County.

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