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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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(Washington, DC-November 3, 2005) - Yesterday was a historic first in the State of Oregon when the Oregon Supreme Court announced that Justice Paul J. De Muniz was elected Chief Justice by a unanimous decision of the justices currently serving on the Court. Justice De Muniz is the first Latino elected to serve as Chief Justice, and will assume his new position on Oregon's highest court on January 1, 2006. "I am profoundly honored by the trust placed in me by my colleagues to help lead the judiciary in Oregon," Justice De Muniz said.

"Justice De Muniz has had a long and continuous record of public service, and the Hispanic National Bar Association congratulates him on his monumental achievement. We wish him well as he continues to serve the people of Oregon in his new position as Chief Justice of the Oregon Supreme Court," stated Nelson A. Castillo, President of the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA).

"Justice De Muniz is a model of professionalism and integrity. He has been a role model and mentor to many Oregonians, including countless numbers of Latino law students, lawyers and other legal professionals. Additionally, he has been supportive of the Oregon Hispanic Bar Association by actively participating in its events over the years. It is indeed an honor to have Justice De Muniz serve in this prestigious position on Oregon's highest court," stated Román D. Hernández, HNBA Regional President for Region XVI which includes Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana and Alaska.

The HNBA is a non-profit, national association that represents the interests of over 27,000 Hispanic American attorneys, judges, law professors, law students and legal professionals. Its continuing mission is to improve the study, practice and administration of justice for all Americans by ensuring the meaningful participation of Hispanic-Americans in the legal profession.

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