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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Thomas K. Thornburg to receive State Bar Leadership Award for championing rights of Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers**

*Thornburg nominated by Michigan Department of Civil Rights for the Champion of Justice award*

LANSING – The Michigan Department of Civil Rights is pleased to congratulate Thomas K. Thornburg upon receiving the Champion of Justice Award Wednesday evening, September 19, 2012 during the State Bar of Michigan Awards Banquet at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Michigan Department of Civil Rights, which issued a 2010 report examining the conditions faced by migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Michigan, nominated Thornburg for this award because of his dedication to migrant and seasonal farm workers (MSFWs).

“Tom Thornburg has been an exemplary leader in working to better the lives of migrant and seasonal farm workers. I personally had the opportunity to visit migrant labor camps in the summer of 2011 as a result of a report that the Michigan Civil Rights Commission published in March of the previous year,” said Daniel H. Krichbaum, PhD, Director of the Department of Civil Rights. “Tom’s passion and legal expertise truly helped inform the state report that is used today as the roadmap for the living standards of migrant workers.”

As Managing Attorney for Farmworker Legal Services, Tom has continued to maintain and strengthen vital services that assist MSFWs in the legal service area. Thornburg graduated from DePauw University with honors in Economics and his law degree is from the University of Minnesota Law School (1977). Thornburg is a member of the Justice Policy Initiative of the State Bar of Michigan. He is a member and former acting chair of the State of Michigan Interagency Migrant Services Council and presently chairs its Migrant Enumeration Task Force.

“He is not only a good manager of the programs that he administers, but also plays a vital role in the statewide advocacy movement that must occur for farm workers to maintain gainful employment and a decent standard of living,” said Krichbaum. “The Department of Civil Rights is honored to have nominated him and proud to continue working alongside him as he continues his important work in our state.”

For more information on the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, please refer to our website at [www.michigan.gov/mdcr](http://www.michigan.gov/mdcr).

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