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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Deputy District Attorney to Speak on Legal Document Assistant Registration, Compliance and Unfair Business Practices

SANTA ANA, CA—May 9, 2008: Orange County Deputy District Attorney Tracy Hughes will present “Rogue Document Preparers: Unfair Competition and LDA Compliance” on May 30 at 12:00 p.m. Ms. Hughes has successfully prosecuted both civil and criminal cases against non-attorney legal document preparers who fail to comply with the registration and bonding requirements to become a Legal Document Assistant (LDA). The Alliance of Legal Document Assistant Professionals (ALDAP) is sponsoring this seminar as a forum for discussion among LDAs and freelance paralegals, and to facilitate enforcement of the consumer protections afforded under California law.

The increase in self-represented litigants has resulted in a proliferation of non-attorney legal service providers. In response to the significant potential for consumer harm, several states have implemented laws governing legal document preparers who offer services to members of the public. Under California law, non-attorneys are prohibited from providing legal services directly to consumers unless they obtain a \$25,000 bond and register as a Legal Document Assistant in each county where they conduct business. Paralegals are prohibited from advertising to, or contracting with, members of the public, and may only be employed by licensed attorneys. Neither LDAs nor paralegals are permitted to practice law, offer legal advice or draft documents for consumers.

California courts have recognized the need for increased awareness and enforcement of the laws governing the LDA and paralegal professions. With the increase in legal filings by self-represented individuals, the courts have taken note of the number of documents being filed by unregistered non-attorney legal document preparers, and in many cases have sent filings directly to the District Attorneys for investigation and prosecution. In addition to the risk of consumer harm posed by such “rogue” legal document preparers, the unfair competition is a significant burden to legitimate Legal Document Assistants (LDAs), paralegals and attorneys who comply fully with all applicable laws.

Tracy Hughes has worked as a prosecutor in the Orange County District Attorney’s Office since 1995. She has been involved in a wide variety of consumer fraud prosecutions, from the unauthorized practice of law to prosecutions of unlicensed contractors. Ms. Hughes has successfully prosecuted multiple LDA and immigration bond cases, resulting in criminal convictions and restitution payments to consumers who have been victimized.

This event will take place at the Best Western Orange County Airport North, Huntington Room, 2700 Hotel Terrace Dr., Santa Ana, CA. The cost is \$15. Seating is limited. For information or to RSVP, contact Suzanne Ervine at (619) 564-4869 or suzanne@constructioncommando.com. ALDAP’s annual membership meeting and elections will take place immediately following the presentation.

ALDAP is a California non-profit, mutual benefit corporation serving registered Legal Document Assistants and freelance paralegal/LDA dual-professionals. ALDAP’s mission is to promote the LDA profession by providing seminars for continuing legal education, strengthening professional status by establishing and promoting support for professional standards and regulatory compliance, and communicating with the legal community and the general public. For more information, visit <http://www.aldap.com>.