THE 2001 VERMONT LAW REVIEW SERVICE AND INSPIRATION AWARD

The *Vermont Law Review* proudly announces the fourth annual Vermont Inspiration Award. The Award honors that member of the Vermont legal community whose dedication to the common good most inspires confidence in the students of Vermont Law School that an individual's ideals can shape the future of law and society. The Award recognizes the unique character and good works of many of Vermont's devoted practitioners and other members of the legal community. Recipients are nominated by members of the Vermont Law School community and are selected by the *Vermont Law Review*. This year, the recipient is John R. Edwards.

Mr. Edwards has been dedicated to public service in Vermont since 1969. He worked for the Vermont State Police for nearly thirty years and retired as a Lieutenant. Following his retirement, Mr. Edwards was elected to the Vermont House of Representatives where he served three terms. While in the House, Mr. Edwards served on the House Judiciary Committee and focused his efforts on overhauling Vermont's "Driving While Intoxicated" laws. But it is his role in helping to enact Vermont's "Civil Unions" law—an law that continues to drive legal and political debate within Vermont and across the nation[1]—that prompted his nomination for this Award.

Mr. Edwards is a conservative Republican from a conservative district that is generally opposed to Civil Unions. While the Civil Unions bill was in Committee, Mr. Edwards balanced his personal beliefs, the interests of his constituents, and the legal principles of the issue, and ultimately decided to help draft the bill in support of Civil Unions and push it through the Committee. As a conservative Republican and a well-respected member of the House, his actions helped guide fellow legislators. Ultimately, the Civil Unions bill was enacted into law, but Mr. Edwards lost his bid for reelection this past November in an election focused on the Civil Unions debate.

The *Vermont Law Review* recognizes the hard work and contributions of Vermont's elected officials as they work to improve the lives of all Vermonters. Mr. Edwards is the embodiment of that work ethic and public dedication. He is truly an inspiration to us all, and we are proud to recognize him with this Award.

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1. The *Vermont Law Review* dedicated its Fall 2000 edition to articles and essays exploring this important social issue. *See* David Ross & Heather Rider, *A Note from the Editors: A Vermont Law Review Milestone, a Landmark Case, and a Vermont Election*, 25 VT. L. REV. 1 (2000).