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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**LONG-TIME MHAS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JIM PREIS TO RETIRE**

*Mental Health Advocacy Services is launching a search for a new Executive Director and will honor Jim Preis at its October annual celebration*

LOS ANGELES, CA, JUNE 14, 2018: Jim Preis, Executive Director of Mental Health Advocacy Services (MHAS), a legal services program in Los Angeles, has decided to retire after 39 years in that position. Preis has agreed to stay in the role until his replacement is hired, and to continue serving at MHAS in some other capacity after that. MHAS will be launching a search for a new Executive Director starting immediately.

“Jim has built MHAS into the jewel of an organization that it is today. Under Jim’s leadership, MHAS has become a model for providing legal services to low-income individuals living with mental health disabilities,” said Board President David Bower. “We owe Jim an enormous debt of gratitude and we are lucky that he will be able to continue to serve until we find his replacement, and then to stay with us in a reduced but still important role.”

MHAS is the only legal services non-profit organization in Los Angeles County exclusively focused on low-income individuals with mental health disabilities.

“MHAS’s success can be traced to Jim’s vision, leadership, and policy expertise,” said MHAS Board Member and USC Gould School of Law Professor Elyn Saks, a MacArthur Genius Grant recipient and author of the best-selling memoir *The Center Cannot Hold: My Journey Through Madness*. “I am pleased to call him a colleague and a friend.”

Preis became Executive Director in 1979, not long after graduating from the USC Gould School of Law, and has spent his entire career at MHAS. He has seen many changes over that time, including a shift in MHAS’s focus from protecting the rights of patients in the dehumanizing psychiatric institutions of the 1970s, to helping clients live independent lives, with full access to necessary services and free from stigma and discrimination.

“This wasn’t an easy decision,” Preis said. “But it’s time for me to step back and assist the Board in finding MHAS’s leadership for the future. I’m grateful to all the current and past board members, donors, staff, and volunteers of MHAS for their support. And I will continue to champion the rights of people with mental health disabilities.”

MHAS will be honoring Preis at its annual fundraiser on Sunday, October 28, 2018, in a community celebration of his long and effective career. A Jim Preis Fund has been established to honor Preis’s legacy and to support the MHAS mission into the future. Donations to the Fund can be made at the website.

About MHAS:

Mental Health Advocacy Services, Inc. (MHAS) is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to protect and advance the legal rights of children and adults with mental disabilities, in order to maximize autonomy, promote equality, and secure the resources needed to thrive in the community. MHAS accomplishes its mission by providing free legal assistance to low-income individuals and families, with an emphasis on obtaining benefits and services, protecting rights and fighting discrimination. MHAS was established in 1977 as a project of the Los Angeles County and Beverly Hills Bar Associations and became an independent corporation in 1979. In its 41 years, MHAS has assisted more than 79,000 individuals, provided training and technical assistance in the community, and participated in policy advocacy and impact litigation. For more information about MHAS, please visit [mhas-la.org](http://mhas-la.org).

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