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For Immediate Release

Locke Lord Lawyers' Pro Bono Work With Texas Appleseed Project Leads to Passage of Michael Morton Act

(DALLAS) May 17, 2013 – Nearly 40 Locke Lord lawyers from six offices of the international law firm collected information from district attorneys' offices across Texas that helped spark reforms of the statewide criminal discovery process. Dubbed the Michael Morton Act after a man who was mistakenly imprisoned in Texas for 25 years in his wife's murder, the law mandates that prosecutors turn over all evidence to defense lawyers in criminal cases. Texas Gov. Rick Perry signed the bill Thursday.

Led by Dallas Partner Kip Mendrygal, Locke Lord lawyers interviewed prosecutors across Texas and analyzed their criminal discovery practices. The team found systemic inconsistencies from county to county regarding what information was provided to defendants during discovery. The research was conducted as part of a project with Texas Appleseed, a policy-based pro bono organization dedicated to ensuring justice for underprivileged Texas residents. Dallas Partner Elizabeth Mack serves on the Board of Directors of Texas Appleseed.

"The open file policy this creates statewide will bring more transparency and consistency to Texas' criminal discovery process," Mack said. "Our Firm and our lawyers are proud to have been a part of the research and study that has led to positive change and made a difference in the Texas criminal justice system."

Morton was convicted in the murder of his wife and served nearly 25 years in prison before his exoneration and the conviction of the real killer. The former prosecutor who tried Morton is charged with withholding evidence in the case.

Locke Lord's lawyers are involved in pro bono activities around the world and last year volunteered 10,255 hours on a variety of pro bono matters, from legal aid clinics to gaining political asylum for people persecuted in their homelands.

Locke Lord LLP consistently ranks among *American Lawyer's* top 100 U.S. law firms. The Firm's full range of practice and industry areas serve international and national clients from offices in Atlanta, Austin, Chicago, Dallas, Hong Kong, Houston, London, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York, Sacramento, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. It has an excellent reputation in complex litigation, regulatory and transactional work, with its 650-plus lawyers building collaborative relationships and crafting creative solutions – all designed and executed to meet clients' long-term strategic goals.