January 9, 2012

“Lessons Learned” Program

The “Lessons Learned” program was founded and is led by Hank Shea, Senior Distinguished Fellow at the University of St. Thomas School of Law in Minneapolis, MN and a Fellow at the School’s Holloran Center for Ethical Leadership in the Professions. Hank Shea was a federal prosecutor for 20 years in the Office of the U.S. Attorney for the District of Minnesota. He specialized in prosecuting a wide-range of white collar crimes. The “Lessons Learned” program began while he was an Assistant U.S. Attorney working with offenders whom he had prosecuted.

The “Lessons Learned” program brings former offenders into educational institutions and settings to share their understanding of the various reasons and motives behind their criminal misconduct and the many legal, professional, and personal consequences of their offenses, including the impact of their crimes on their victims. These felons -- former lawyers, government officials, bankers, brokers, and business executives -- are each willing to share their powerful, though often painful, stories of temptation, deceit, indulgence, ruin, and recovery. The ultimate goal is to raise awareness of the human costs of unlawful and unethical conduct on those involved, and to foster discussion on how individuals and organizations can best avoid such conduct.

The offenders with whom Hank Shea works typically have served their sentences and are under no obligation to make presentations. They participate in these events voluntarily and without compensation from the Holloran Center or the University of St. Thomas. Neither Hank Shea nor the Holloran Center is responsible for their behavior. Further, any statements by these individuals are their sole opinions, and do not constitute the opinions of the Holloran Center or the University of St. Thomas. While each has personal reasons for participating, most are seeking to make amends for the harms they have caused by cautioning others of the consequences of criminal behavior. While the hope is that these forums can support the reintegration of offenders into society, each participant remains subject to the same temptations and weaknesses that confront all of us. It is unfortunate and deeply disappointing, but not shocking, that some offenders will succumb to earlier patterns of behavior and recidivate. Whenever the Holloran Center learns that an offender has fallen back into criminal, or even unethical, behavior, the Center will end any relationship with that person.

If you have any questions regarding this matter or the Holloran Center, please contact Hank Shea at hjshea@stthomas.edu or 651-962-4867.