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**DISABILITY RIGHTS ADVOCATES ANNOUNCES NEW CO-DIRECTORS OF LITIGATION**

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*Mary-Lee Smith and Stuart Seaborn bring skill and experience to new positions of leadership in national disability rights organization*

**BERKELEY, CA – July 22, 2015** – Disability Rights Advocates (DRA), a leading national nonprofit disability rights legal center, announced today the appointment of Mary-Lee Smith and Stuart Seaborn as the new Co-Directors of Litigation. Co-founders Sid Wolinsky and Larry Paradis will continue to guide DRA in their roles as Supervising Attorney and Executive Director, respectively. Larry praised Mary-Lee and Stuart, saying, “These two are passionate disability rights defenders and talented legal advocates.”

After 10 years at DRA, Mary-Lee remains committed to not only defending but also expanding the civil rights of persons with disabilities. Mary-Lee has twice been named an Attorney of the Year by *California Law Magazine*, first in 2011 for her work in achieving a landmark \$1.1 billion settlement requiring Caltrans to provide access to its sidewalks throughout the state, and again in 2013 for establishing legal precedent in a case against the City and County of Los Angeles requiring emergency and disaster planning efforts to account for the needs of people with disabilities. Mary-Lee has also been named one of the *Daily Journal’s* Top Women Lawyers in 2014.

Mary-Lee first joined DRA in 2005 as a DRA/Westrec Marinas fellow, and has served as Managing Attorney in the years prior to her appointment as Co-Director of Litigation. She received her law degree from the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law (Boalt Hall) in 2005, and her Masters of Art degree in Political Science from Stanford University in 2001.

Stuart has been litigating in the public interest for over 15 years. “Through DRA’s work in both California and New York,” he said, “we have established national precedents, and I’m very proud of this.” In one example, *Disabled in Action/United v. Board of Elections*, Stuart achieved a national precedent for the rights of voters with disabilities by successfully arguing that they were entitled, by the Americans with Disabilities Act, to the same private and independent voting experience provided by election officials to non-disabled voters. Stuart was also lead counsel in *Lighthouse for the Blind v. Redbox Automated Retail*

*LLC*, which resulted in a statewide class-action settlement that will make all of the approximately three thousand Redbox video-rental kiosks in California accessible for blind customers.

Prior to joining DRA in 2011, Stuart was the Managing Attorney of Disability Rights California at their Sacramento Regional Office, where he spent several years advocating for the civil rights on persons with disabilities. Stuart received his law degree from the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Law in 1998.

#### **ABOUT DISABILITY RIGHTS ADVOCATES (DRA)**

With offices in California and New York, Disability Rights Advocates (DRA) is one of the leading nonprofit disability rights legal centers in the nation. Its mission is to advance equal rights and opportunity for people with all types of disabilities nationwide. In the organization's 20+ year history, DRA has taken on more than 400 cases and won almost all—achieving dramatic improvements for people with disabilities seeking health care, employment, transportation, education, disaster preparedness planning, voting and housing. For more information regarding DRA, visit [www.dralegal.org](http://www.dralegal.org).

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