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Since 1974, Fighting for Women's Equality

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Equal Rights Advocates Represents Women Wrestlers At Trial in Title IX Case Against Regents of the University of California

SACRAMENTO, Calif., May 24, 2011 -- A long-awaited trial on behalf of former women wrestlers at the University of California at Davis began May 23rd in U.S. District Court. At issue in *Mansourian et. al. v. Regents of the University of California et.al.*: the importance of equal education.

As Noreen Farrell, Managing Attorney for Equal Rights Advocates, said in her opening statement, "This case is about the importance of equal education, including the opportunity to participate in intercollegiate sports, especially at a public university funded by our tax dollars." Plaintiffs Arezou Mansourian, Christine Ng and Lauren Mancuso first brought suit in 2003 against the Regents of the University of California to challenge discrimination they faced a decade ago as students and wrestlers at UC Davis.

Farrell said, "These defendants were supposed to ensure these young women's college experience was supportive, equitable and in compliance with the law. Instead," she alleged, "these defendants taught these young women that there remain some places where girls are not wanted." She went on to say, "Federal gender equity laws extend to sports as much as calculus because everyone should have a fair opportunity to benefit from the immense life lessons learned through college sports. Arezou, Christine and Lauren expected and were entitled to be treated as equals in the classroom and on the wrestling mat. Defendants were responsible for giving them that opportunity and they failed. As women's enrollment numbers increased between 1999 and 2005, and as the athletic department budget doubled, the number of women participating in sports plummeted." Farrell said, "Gender equity and these young women paid the price."

Co-counsel are Sturdevant Law Firm, Equity Legal and Duckworth, Peters, Lebowitz, Olivier LLP.

For updates on the case, which is expected to last several weeks, follow ERA on twitter.com/EqualRightsAdv or visit the Facebook page at fb.me/EqualRightsAdvocates. For information about a settlement in a related case, see "Student-Athletes Benefit from Title IX Women in Sports Equity Settlement Fund" at http://equalrights.org/media/ERA_TitleIX_May20.pdf

About ERA

Equal Rights Advocates (ERA), founded in 1974, is a national civil rights organization dedicated to protecting and expanding economic and educational access and opportunities for women and girls. Through its campaign approach—incorporating public education, legislative advocacy, and litigation—ERA seeks to assist women and girls throughout a life-long continuum: ensuring equality in their educational experience, combating sex discrimination in the workforce, and advocating for workplaces hospitable to working families. For more information, see equalrights.org.

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