Senator Sheila Kuehl to Deliver Commencement Address at Whittier Law School
May 23

Costa Mesa, CA, May 18, 2004 – Whittier Law School celebrates its Thirty-Sixth Commencement Sunday, May 23rd at 3:00 p.m. in the quad of Whittier Law School. Senator Sheila Kuehl of California’s 23rd District will deliver the commencement address and will be awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa. “Senator Kuehl’s lifelong support of social justice epitomizes the values and goals the Law School encourages its students to embrace,” said Neil H. Cogan, Dean & Vice President, Whittier Law School.

Sheila James Kuehl was elected to the State Senate in 2000 after serving for six years in the State Assembly. She was the first woman in California history to be named Speaker pro Tempore of the Assembly. She is also the first openly gay or lesbian person to be elected to the California Legislature. In her eight years in the State Legislature, Sen. Kuehl has authored one hundred-nine bills that have been signed into law, including legislation to establish paid family leave, establish the rights recognized in Roe vs. Wade in California statute, overhaul California’s child support services system; prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender and disability in the workplace and sexual orientation in education; increase the rights of crime victims; and many, many others. She is the author of currently pending legislation to establish Universal Health Care for all Californians through a single payer system; prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender and disability in the workplace and sexual orientation in education; increase the rights of crime victims; and many, many others. She is the author of currently pending legislation to establish Universal Health Care for all Californians through a single payer system. She was selected to address the 1996 Democratic National Convention on the issue of family violence and the 2000 Democratic National Convention on the issue of diversity. In 1996, George Magazine selected her as one of the 20 most fascinating women in politics and the California Journal named her “Rookie of the Year.” Senator Kuehl graduated from Harvard Law School in 1978, where she was the second woman in the school’s history to win the Moot Court competition.

The Law School will award J.D. degrees to 159 students, and ten students from China, France, India, Israel, Spain, Taiwan, and Turkey will be awarded LL.M. degrees in U.S. Legal Studies. The Valedictorian is Jennifer A. Culhane, Lead Articles Editor for Whittier Law Review and Moot Court Juvenile Justice. Visiting Professor John Heilman will be awarded Teacher of the Year for the fourth time.

Whittier Law School, founded in 1966 as Beverly Law School, is, for the fourth consecutive year, ranked as one of the most diverse law schools in the nation, this year tied for first in a national ranking. In 1975, the Law School became a part of Whittier College, founded in 1887. Whittier Law School now boasts a network of 3,900 alumni practicing in 48 states and 14 countries. The Law School has nationally recognized centers in Children’s Rights, Intellectual Property Law, and International & Comparative Law, which host fellows, offer externships, sponsor symposia and workshops. WLS has five Clinics serving the public in the following areas: Children’s Rights, Special Education, Family Violence, Health Care Access, and Legal Policy. The Law School, located in Costa Mesa, is fully accredited by the American Bar Association and is a member of the Association of American Law Schools.