

**NEW GESU SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES CHAIRMAN J. GORDON COONEY JR.
LEADS THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE – IN EDUCATION AND IN THE COURTS**

PHILADELPHIA (October 2010) – J. Gordon Cooney Jr., the Philadelphia attorney taking a former Louisiana death-row inmate’s fight for justice to the U.S. Supreme Court this month, is applying those skills closer to home by seeking educational justice for inner-city children as the new chairman of the Gesu School Board of Trustees.

Cooney has been heavily involved with Gesu, a North Philadelphia independent Catholic school recognized as a national model for inner-city education, since 1997. A member of the school’s board for the past eight years and most recently its co-vice chairman, he was selected to succeed founding chairman Winston J. Churchill, who will serve as co-vice chairman along with Robert M. McAlaine, non-executive chairman of Eastern Insurance Holdings.

“Gordon has proven to be a dedicated advocate of educational opportunity for society’s most vulnerable children,” said Churchill, a renowned venture capitalist who helped save Gesu from closure, garner widespread support for the school and develop its reputation for educating children against all odds. “I am confident that he will take Gesu to a new and higher level.”

Cooney is a litigation partner with the global law firm of Morgan, Lewis & Bockius and managing partner of its Philadelphia office, which has offered student internships and provided pro bono assistance to Gesu for many years. An American College of Trial Lawyers fellow who has earned recognition as one of the nation’s best lawyers, Cooney has won numerous cases for well-known Fortune 500 companies.

But the pro bono case to which he and fellow Morgan, Lewis partner Michael Banks have devoted 22 years is the one that has earned the most headlines. Their dedication to uncovering prosecutorial misconduct in the case of a man wrongfully convicted of murder and sentenced to death led to a new trial, an acquittal and a \$14 million civil jury award that has been appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which will hear arguments led by Cooney on October 6. The fight for justice has resulted in the book, “Killing Time: An 18-Year Odyssey from Death Row to Freedom,” written by former Morgan, Lewis litigator John Hollway and Louisiana state prison librarian Ron Gauthier, along with a possible movie featuring actors Ben Affleck and Matt Damon.

Seeking justice for children through education is equally important to Cooney and his wife, Gretchen, who have supported Gesu for many years. Through the school's "Sponsor a Child" program, they and their son, Jack, spend time at Gesu events and outside of school with the child they sponsor.

"All children deserve the kind of quality education that transforms lives," said Cooney, a 1981 graduate of Wesleyan University and a 1984 *magna cum laude* graduate of Villanova University School of Law. "I've seen it first-hand at Gesu and know it's our civic responsibility to help make it happen."

Gesu School, which serves 460 mostly non-Catholic children in grades pre-K through 8 without selective admission, strives to provide a quality, innovative education for its neighbor children and empower them to break the cycle of poverty and violence. In a neighborhood where only 34 percent of adults over 25 hold a high school diploma, more than 90 percent of Gesu alumni graduate high school in four years, and many go on to college.