**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Judge Kathleen Gearin to speak on Cameras in the Courts**

**At 2013 Freedom of Information Day and Finnegan FOI Award Ceremony**

**Minneapolis, MN: February 19** – At noon on Thursday, March 14, 2013, the Minnesota Coalition on Government Information (MNCOGI) will present its annual Freedom of Information Day Award at the Minneapolis Central Library. The event coincides with Sunshine Week, a national initiative aimed at highlighting government transparency.

The keynote speaker for the event is Ramsey County District Court Judge Kathleen Gearin. Judge Gearin will provide an update on Minnesota’s year-long “Cameras in the Courtroom” pilot project that allows media cameras to record civil proceedings in select courtrooms across the state. Judge Gearin will provide an overview of the project, along with her own observations on its results so far.

Following Judge Gearin’s remarks, MNCOGI will bestow its annual John R. Finnegan Freedom of Information Award to the 2013 recipient. The John R. Finnegan Freedom of Information Award was established by MNCOGI in 1989 and is named for the retired senior vice-president and assistant publisher of the *St. Paul Pioneer Press.* Finnegan was a life-long stalwart of open meetings, open records and the First Amendment. He was instrumental in creating the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act – the state’s open records framework. Each year, the award honors a Minnesotan or Minnesota institution whose work demonstrates leadership and commitment to the power of information to effect change.

When: Thursday March 14, 2013

Where: Minneapolis Central Library, Pohlad Hall, 300 Nicollet Mall, Mpls, MN 55401

Time: 12:00pm-1:00pm

Freedom of Information Day is usually commemorated each year on March 16th, the birth date of James Madison, a champion of access and transparency in government.  This year’s celebration will be on March 14th.

**About the Minnesota Coalition on Government Information (MNCOGI)**

MNCOGI is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to the public’s right to know, the promotion of public access to government information and transparency of government operations. MNCOGI Board members are John Borger; Helen Burke, Chair; Hal Davis, Duchesne Drew; Matt Ehling; Don Gemberling, Secretary; Art Hughes; Gary Hill; Jane Kirtley; and Robbie LaFleur, Treasurer.

For more information about MNCOGI, please visit our website at [www.mncogi.org](http://www.mncogi.org/).

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