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## Laura Chesney Named 79<sup>th</sup> President

*SAINT PAUL, Minn.*– The Saint Paul Jaycees announced last night that Laura Chesney will lead the chapter as President in 2005. Chesney, a three-year member of the Saint Paul Jaycees, will be the organization's 79<sup>th</sup> president.

"Laura's commitment and professionalism have made it a true joy to work with her this year," said Lisa Dinzeo Hiebert, 78<sup>th</sup> President of the Saint Paul Jaycees. "I know that her enthusiasm for community involvement, willingness to try new things, and dedicated organizational style will continue to serve our chapter well in 2005."

Rather than subject its members to campaigning candidates, the Saint Paul Jaycees designate a chapter committee to review all members eligible to serve and invite the best candidate to be Chapter President. Chesney will be formally endorsed by the membership at their monthly social in November and will take the oath of office at the Saint Paul Jaycees' Annual Gala in January. Between now and January, she will be busy assigning positions for the 2005 Board of Directors and setting goals for the chapter to accomplish in the coming year.

"I'm very excited, and feel quite privileged, to be asked to serve in this role," said Chesney. "It's quite an honor to kick off our chapter's next 75 years of community service, and continue our great tradition of making a positive difference in St. Paul."

While she will assume the role of the 79<sup>th</sup> President, Chesney is one of only eleven women to serve this role in a chapter history that dates back to 1929. Starting in 1975, the Saint Paul chapter began admitting women as regular members, an act that prompted the U.S. Jaycees to threaten revocation of Saint Paul's charter. When Saint Paul elected Anne Ford Nelson as its first woman President, the charter was revoked. The Saint Paul Jaycees sued, taking the case to the Supreme Court, challenging that the U.S. Jaycees cannot deny any membership based on gender. The court ruled in favor of Saint Paul in April 1984, and its charter was restored by the end of August 1984.

An interest in community service and fostering new friendships led Chesney to join the Saint Paul Jaycees. Throughout her membership, Chesney has been recognized for her contributions to the

Saint Paul chapter. In 2002, she was awarded a chapter Bronze key, an honor extended to only 16 members a year, in recognition of outstanding service to the chapter. This year, Chesney was recognized by the Minnesota Jaycees as the Gold Management Development Vice President for the first quarter. Her extraordinary accomplishments in addition to fulfilling her duties as a chapter vice president also garnered a Presidential Medallion, a unique honor bestowed by the State President.

Chesney was very active during her first year of membership, chairing a number of social events. She was recruited to serve as the Social Director on the chapter's 2003 Board of Directors. In that role, she was instrumental in setting the chapter's agenda for socialization opportunities throughout the year that reinforced the chapter's role as a conduit for business networking. During 2004, Chesney is serving the chapter as Management Development Vice President, a role that oversees all fundraising activities for the chapter.

Chesney's leadership in 2005 will draw not only on her years of service as a Jaycee, but also her other volunteering experiences, including the Hugh O'Brien Youth Foundation (HOBY) and the Brian Piccolo Cancer Research Celebrity Golf Tournament.

Chesney was born in Chicago Heights, Illinois, and grew up in Homewood, Illinois. She graduated from Creighton University in 1993 with a double degree in elementary education and special education. She moved to Minnesota in 1994.

### **About the Saint Paul Jaycees**

The Jaycee organization offers its members opportunities to serve their community, establish rewarding friendships, and create professional contacts. The Saint Paul chapter is one of Minnesota's largest, with nearly 200 members, and is celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2004. Saint Paul and surrounding communities benefit from 120 Jaycee-run projects each year.

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