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Former USC dean of students returns to legal aid community

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LOS ANGELES - After nearly two decades helping law students get involved in public service, Lisa Mead has returned to a position where she can practice what she's been preaching.

Mead, former USC Gould School of Law dean of students and founder of the school's Office of Public Service, joined Inner City Law Center as director of pro bono in May.

Shaped by the racism and misogyny she witnessed as a child in 1960s Texas, Mead said she always knew she wanted to be involved in public service, working first as a social worker before attending USC School of Law.

After four years at Public Counsel Law Center, Mead became assistant dean of career services at USC's law school and later the dean of students.

It was in the latter role that she developed the law school's Office of Public Service, where she sought to make public service an integral part of the student experience at USC.

"We as lawyers have a responsibility to provide service to those in need in our communities," said Mead.



"Additionally, it's really important to inculcate students with an ethic of service while they're in law school."

Mead departed USC in 2008 and worked as a consultant for three years. But she began to miss the experience of working with others as a team toward a shared mission. Mead said that working at Inner City Law Center is everything she had hoped for "and then some."

Her main duties include connecting lawyers from the private bar to the center in an attempt to fight homelessness among low-income families and military veterans. Mead said she feels it is an "honor and a privilege" to be involved with such talented and gracious people on a daily basis.

Her connection with USC hasn't faltered, either. In fact, it's prospering.

Inner City Law Center will team up with nearly 100 new law students at USC at the end of August to work on a service project. The weeklong process will culminate on Aug. 25 with the students reaching out and meeting potential clients of the center.

She created one of the best environments for stimulating interest in public interest work in the country," said USC Gould School of Law Dean Robert K. Rasmussen in a statement. "I am thrilled that Lisa will be at Inner City Law Center and I look forward to strengthening the bonds we already have with this important institution."

Mead said it gives her great joy to continue to work with students in such a fashion. Now she has made it one of her goals to reconnect with the students she once oversaw at USC, something she said has already begun.

"Now that they're practicing lawyers, partners and associates, I would love to get them back into the fold and perform pro bono work with Inner City Law Center."