

**PROCLAIMING
GIDEON V. WAINWRIGHT COMMEMORATION
March 18, 2003**

WHEREAS, On March 18, 1963, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its decision in *Gideon v. Wainwright*, in which a poor Florida prison inmate caused the single biggest change in the history of the U.S. criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, The *Gideon* decision guaranteed assistance of counsel to all persons facing imprisonment even if they could not afford to hire an attorney; and

WHEREAS, The *Gideon* decision provided the impetus for the development of statewide programs offering legal counsel to indigent defendants in felony cases, and later to misdemeanor and juvenile cases; and

WHEREAS, Public Defender and indigent defender offices have become an increasingly important component of the justice system, reflecting society's concern that all individuals receive proper counsel to protect their rights under law; and

WHEREAS, Public Defender and indigent defense services are essential to maintain a proper balance in the criminal justice system so that citizens will be assured that the law will be applied effectively and equitably to all persons; and

WHEREAS, the Office of the Marin County Public Defender and the Alternate Defenders, Inc. programs have been providing excellent and competent counsel for persons unable to afford counsel and deserve to be honored together with a commemoration of the *Gideon* decision on this important day of American justice.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Marin hereby commemorates the 40th anniversary of the landmark case of *Gideon v. Wainwright* on this day, March 18, 2003, and commends the hardworking attorneys in the Office of the Marin County Public Defender and the attorneys working through the Alternate Defenders, Inc. program for their commitment and diligence in keeping our system fair and providing excellent representation to those who cannot afford to hire counsel.