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University of St. Thomas School of Law Associate Professor Nekima Levy-Pounds has received the Profiles in Courage Award from the Minnesota Association of Black Lawyers.

MABL bestows the award annually on an individual or entity that has demonstrated the highest level of courage, excellence and integrity in furthering the organization's mission of representing the interests of Black citizens in the legal profession and in the judicial system.

The award was presented to Levy-Pounds by U.S. Rep. Keith Ellison at the MABL Foundation’s Annual Scholarship Gala Nov. 10 at the Marriot West in Minneapolis. Ellison, who as a state legislator received the award in 2006, remarked that Levy-Pounds’ work in educating the public on the proposed voter ID constitutional amendment played a key role in its defeat in Minnesota last month.

Levy-Pounds is the founding director of the Community Justice Project, an award-winning civil rights legal clinic. Levy-Pounds teaches and supervises law students as they use the law as a tool to advance the cause of social justice in poor communities of color through problem-solving, legal research and writing, community engagement and legislative advocacy.

In addition to her work in the Community Justice Project, Levy-Pounds contributes to the field of civil rights and criminal justice by serving as a consultant to local civil rights organizations and community groups, as a commentator in local media, and as a lecturer and speaker at national and international forums.

Her scholarly interests include the impact of the war on drugs on African-American children and families, the treatment of women in prisons, and intersecting issues of race, class and the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems.

Because of her work in the Community Justice Project, Levy-Pounds was selected by Sen. Al Franken to advise him in his decision to nominate Elena Kagan for the U.S. Supreme Court.