

Wrongful Conviction Edition Welcome, Freedom Fighter!

Leading Michigan wrongful conviction attorney joins HFP!

Marla Mitchell-Cichon, Director of the WMU-Cooley Innocence Project in Lansing, has been appointed to a three-year term on the Humanity for Prisoners Board of Directors. The announcement was made by board chairman Russ Bloem. The WMU-Cooley Innocence Project works to free innocent Michigan prisoners through the use of DNA testing. In 2006, Professor Mitchell-Cichon received the Justice for All Award from the Criminal Defense Attorneys of Michigan (CDAM) and in 2014 the WMU-Cooley Innocence Project received the Outstanding Community Contribution award from the WMU-Cooley Student Bar Association. We're proud to add her name to our team membership!



Michigan exoneree's story in new book! Kenneth Wyniemko's innocence was proved by DNA test



From left to right, Kenny Wyniemko, HFP founder Doug Tjapkes, author Bob Henige and publisher Terry Ziemba. The trio joined the HFP founder to present a signed copy of their new book, "Deliberate Injustice."

In 1994, Kenny was wrongfully convicted of a savage rape and sentenced to 40 years in prison. With the help of the Michigan Innocence Project, Kenny was exonerated after nearly nine years in prison.

Maurice Carter's story goes to Atlanta! Staged reading at the Atlanta Black Theatre Festival

Justice for Maurice Henry Carter, a powerful drama written by Canadians Donald Molnar and Alicia Payne, is based on the true story of the enduring friendship between the wrongly



convicted Carter who spent 29 years in prison, and his friend Doug Tjapkes, of Spring Lake. The playwrights are from Toronto, and the host of the performance was Nadia Theodor, the Consul General of Canada in Atlanta.

From the desk of Doug: Defense Attorneys? You bet!

"I don't know how you sleep at night."

That's what my friend told his new son-in-law, who, as it turns out, is a criminal defense attorney. My friend is a conservative "law-and-order" type guy.



I'm going to take the opposite approach. In this month of Thanksgiving, I'm going to express my thanks to a group of un-sung heroes, criminal defense attorneys; and even more specifically, those involved in public assistance for the indigent.

"How can one justify defending a criminal?" My friend asks the question in indignation.

There's something very important to remember here. The U.S. Constitution guarantees "due process." And believe me, it keeps cops and prosecutors in line. If they don't prove their case beyond a reasonable doubt, they might not win. And that's exactly the way it ought to be.

In our business, we see too many cases where inferior police work, junk science, and prosecutorial misconduct result in wrongful convictions. (Yes, poor criminal defense fits in there, too!) I might sooner ask, "How can someone sleep well at night, knowing that the wrong person, even though he/she might be an unsavory character, has been sent to prison?"

At Thanksgiving time, 2019, I'm thankful for Innocence Projects, for public defenders who work long hours for lower wages, for Legal Aid attorneys who are often poorly treated by their clients, and for all criminal defense attorneys, wherever they are.

HFP on Display!



Our thanks to Eloy Cantu, Jr., and his wife Marcia, for their gift of this beautiful new banner and table runner. The unit, created by their company Skyline Exhibits West Michigan, features the classic photo of Maurice Carter meeting his elderly mother on the day of his release in 2004. It will be used for our exhibit at meetings and conferences.

HFP for the long haul!

Board Chairman Russ Bloem has announced formation of The Sweet Freedom Legacy Circle, established late this year to acknowledge and thank those friends and supporters who have committed to carrying forward the Humanity for Prisoners mission through their planned gifts and to encourage and inspire others to do the same. He said this project will honor founders Doug Tjapkes and Maurice Carter. Our agency began its prisoner advocacy work in 2001. Watch for more details.

**Coming Soon:
Our year-end matching
funds campaign!**

Messages to our office

HFP's unique service involves one-on-one assistance to Michigan prisoners

Ray's wrongful conviction gets new attention

"There has been some new development in the effort for freedom. The Innocence Clinic has agreed to reopen my case. An investigator was able to obtain an affidavit from one of the eye-witness who, from the outset, had said it wasn't me. In addition, she also picked the two men (from photos) that did the crime. That is considered new evidence."

We were there for Joe's Public Hearing

"Thank you so much for your support. Thank you for everything HFP has done for me from day one. Through this organization I have accomplished so much. I think the hearing went very well. I look forward to an opportunity to rebuild my life as best as I can. Hope to see you on the other side really soon."

Inmates seeking clemency want help

"My brother cannot file an application for commutation until next July, but I want to help him get started on his wording regarding empathy right now."

"My friend Shelly is in the infirmary, and wants information on how to file for a commutation. Please email her."

A friend asked that we contact a terminally ill prisoner

"Unfortunately, our friend Bob passed away Friday afternoon. He became increasingly sicker and went altogether blind Thursday night. By Friday morning he had become completely unresponsive and they sent him out to the hospital about 1PM. At least this bit is finally over for him. Thanks for sending someone to visit him. He said that it meant a lot to him. May the Good Lord's face smile upon you and the great work you do."

We reach out to a drug addict who re-offended and feels alone

"I never got any encouragement, just a bunch of reasons why I can't be or shouldn't be or what I should be. Gotta laugh now because I bet in hindsight a whole lot of people wished they had encouraged me. I don't know what gave you the inspiration to reach out to me yesterday, but I want you to know never in life have I felt nor have I been so alone, my thoughts have drifted to a darkness words can't describe, I guess I'm writing just to say if you wrote hoping to make a difference, I could spend weeks trying to explain that you did, and still you wouldn't truly know how your few words impacted me and my journey. Thank you for being You!"

A lost brother