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Overdue Justice Has More to Do with Process Flaws than Due Process

5th Annual Wrongful Conviction Day

TULSA, OK - October 2, 2018 - The focus of this year's Wrongful Conviction Day is to raise awareness about the role racial bias plays in wrongful convictions. According to the Innocence Network, 63% of the 513 people exonerated by their members are people of color.

"In my first criminal defense case," says Oklahoma lawyer and author, Jim Lloyd, "racial bias played a big role in the 'rush to conviction' that nearly stampeded us. My client and I were extremely unpopular and the task seemed insurmountable."

According to the National Registry of Exonerations, the main causes of wrongful conviction are eyewitness misidentification, unvalidated and improper forensic science, false confessions, informants, government misconduct and inadequate defense.

Lloyd asserts, "During that first criminal defense case, my client endured every one of those causes of wrongful convictions except one; so I know first hand that it happens." He grimaces, "At first, I was part of the problem. As a newbie lawyer in a racially charged case against powerful financial and political opponents, we were under a lot of pressure. Her defense was inadequate. Thank goodness I became more adequate in the subsequent trials."

Lloyd continues, "Most people can imagine the benefits of exoneration - righting a terrible wrong for the victim and their families. But one thing the public often forgets is how dangerous it is to convict the wrong person."

According to the Innocence Network, when an innocent person is exonerated using DNA evidence, the person who actually committed the crime is often identified. This happened 158 times to date. While 362 innocents sat behind bars, the real perpetrators committed 150 additional violent crimes (for which they were eventually convicted), including 80 sexual assaults, 35 murders, and 35 other violent crimes.

"We Oklahomans have our own Innocence Project in conjunction with Oklahoma City University School of Law," says Lloyd. "As of September 10, 2018 our project has 35 exonerations listed on the National Registry of Exonerations and 7 of the exonerated had been given a death sentence."

71% of DNA cases involved eyewitness misidentification and 41% of those cases were cross-racial misidentifications (according to the Innocence Project).

79% of Innocence Network exonerees arrested for crimes that occurred when they were minors are people of color. And innocent black people are about 7 times more likely to be convicted of murder than innocent white people (according to the National Registry of Exonerations).

Lloyd offers three tips to help stop wrongful convictions.



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- On Wrongful Conviction Day, raise awareness and educate others about racial bias in the criminal justice system; pull the Innocence Network's hash tags suggestions and pictures and share them on your Twitter, Pinterest, and Facebook accounts.
- Contact your local innocence organization and ask how you can help; sign up for the newsletter.
- Tell your local organization about exonerations they may have missed if you know of some.

"October 2 is the fifth annual Wrongful Conviction Day," Lloyd says. "I, for one, plan to talk with people about how our Oklahoma legal system can be improved so every person in the state is ensured a fair trial."

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ABOUT LAWYER & AUTHOR JIM LLOYD

Jim Lloyd was the actual defense lawyer during the trial involving a false confession and other causes that often lead to wrongful convictions as detailed in his nonfiction legal procedural novel, "*Almost A Murder*". The book exposes the social, personal, and financial costs of racial bias in the Oklahoma legal system as it details this epic battle. The book is distributed through Ingram and is available online at Barnes & Noble, Google Books, and Amazon. For more information, visit the website, <http://AlmostAMurder.com>.

ABOUT WRONGFUL CONVICTION DAY

This international day was created to raise awareness of the causes and remedies of wrongful conviction and to recognize the tremendous personal, social, and emotional costs of wrongful conviction for innocent people and their families. Visit the website, <http://www.intlwrongfulconvictionday.org/>, for more information.

ABOUT THE INNOCENCE NETWORK

The Innocence Network is an affiliation of 68 independent organizations spread across the United States and around the globe. They are dedicated to providing pro bono legal and investigative services to individuals seeking to prove innocence of crimes for which they have been convicted, working to redress the causes of wrongful convictions (alleviating flaws in the criminal justice system), and supporting the exonerated after they are freed. Wrongful Conviction Day began as an effort of the Innocence Network. For more information visit the website at <http://innocencenetwork.org/>.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL REGISTRY OF EXONERATIONS

The registry is a project of the Newkirk Center for Science & Society at University of California Irvine, the University of Michigan Law School and Michigan State University College of Law. The registry provides comprehensive information on exonerations of innocent criminal defendants in order to prevent future false convictions by learning from past errors. We also aim to make society more sensitive to the problem of wrongful convictions and more willing to reconsider the guilt of defendants who have already been convicted when new evidence of innocence comes to light. For more information visit the website at <https://www.law.umich.edu/special/exoneration/Pages/about.aspx>.