

Abolition Alert

2013 is AADP's 20th Anniversary!
 Congratulations on all your success. Thanks to all our founders. Historical information will be provided in the next newsletter.



Alaskans Against the Death Penalty



ANNUAL FISH FRY

Friday, July 26th, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Nancy Groszek's lovely garden
 2512 St. Elias Drive

Special Guest:

KIRK BLOODSWORTH

Kirk Bloodsworth was convicted in March of 1985 for the brutal killing and sexual assault of a nine-year-old girl. The victim was found dead in July of 1984. She had been strangled, raped, and beaten with a rock. Bloodsworth was arrested based on an anonymous call telling police that he was seen with the victim that day and an identification made by a witness from a police sketch that was based on the recollections of five eyewitnesses. Bloodsworth also became the first person to be exonerated from death row through post conviction DNA testing.

Kirk's appearance on Colbert Nation:

<http://www.colbertnation.com/the-colbert-report-videos/427309/june-19-2013/remembering-lorna-colbert>



Visit often!

We like it when you visit our webpage:
<http://www.aadp.info/>

Save The Date!
2013 Day of Faith in Action Sept. 29th

AADP Website

www.AADP.info/

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We are Proud of Our AADP Heroines!



Katie Hurley

2013 Alaska Bar Foundation
Rabinowitz Public Service
Award



Barb Hood

2013 Alaska Court System
Community Outreach Award
Foundation Rabinowitz Public
Service Award



**Susan
Orlansky**

2013 International Law
Sections Human Rights
Award

*Her partner, Jeff Feldman,
is equally recognized,
though not pictured here.*



Sally's
Kitchen
Singers at
the 2012
Day of
Faith in
Action



Paula Cooper, Youngest Female Ever Sentenced to Death in the U.S., Released from Prison

Paula Cooper, who was 15 years old at the time of her crime, and the youngest female ever sentenced to death in the United States, was released from prison on June 17, twenty-seven years after her conviction for the murder of 78-year-old Ruth Pelke. An Indiana judge sentenced Cooper to death on July 11, 1986, when she was 16.

Her case received international attention, sparking a campaign that led to the commutation of her death sentence to 60 years in prison. An appeal to the Indiana Supreme Court received over 2 million signatures from around the world. Pope John Paul II asked that Cooper's sentence be reduced. **Bill Pelke**, the grandson of Ruth Pelke, forgave and befriended Cooper and wrote a book, *Journey of Hope...From Violence to Healing*, about his experience with the case.

Statement from Bill Pelke: "Paula Cooper was released from prison on Monday, June 17, after over 28 years in prison. I went to Indiana in hopes of welcoming her back to society on her release, but it was not to be. She went immediately into a safe house at an undisclosed location somewhere in the State of Indiana and I have not seen or heard from her. I had scheduled my return from the 5th World Congress Against the Death Penalty in Madrid, Spain, to be in Indiana to meet her at the prison gates.

In connection with her release, I did television interviews with CNN, HLN, BBC, NBC, WGN, CBS, WLS, ABC and Lakeshore TV and radio. I also did newspaper interviews for the Gary Post Tribune, NWI Times, AP, and with journalists in Spain, France, Norway, Holland and others."

An appeal to the Indiana Supreme Court received over 2 million signatures from around the world.



Bill Pelke & Paula Cooper

One of Bill's interviews with *Democracy Now*:

<http://www.cnn.com/2013/06/17/justice/death-row-freedom/index.html?iref=allsearch>

Maryland is the Sixth State in Six Years to Abandon Capital Punishment!

RECENT LEGISLATION: Maryland Death Penalty Will Not Face Referendum



Maryland's death penalty repeal legislation will take effect as scheduled on October 1, 2013, after its opponents were unsuccessful in securing the number of signatures required to put the issue on the November 2014 ballot. The group announced that it only collected about 15,000 signatures, falling short of the 18,579 signatures required in order to proceed.

"To be reaffirmed by the public, and know that justice is served, is wonderful," said Del. Samuel I. Rosenberg (D-Baltimore), who supported the repeal bill. "This is the most profound thing I will ever do."

On May 2, Maryland became the sixth state in six years to abandon capital punishment when Governor Martin O'Malley signed the repeal bill into law.

U.S. Court of Appeals Allows Re-Trial of Justin Wolfe, Despite State’s Misconduct



Justin Wolfe

On May 22, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit ruled (2-1) that the federal District Court overstepped its authority when it barred any further prosecution of **Justin Wolfe**. The Circuit Court upheld the lower court’s order requiring **Virginia** to either retry Wolfe or release him, and it further held that Virginia failed to comply with that order.

In 2002, Wolfe was convicted of conspiracy and sentenced to death in the murder of a drug dealer in Virginia. His conviction was based primarily on the testimony of the actual shooter, Owen Barber, who claimed that Wolfe hired him to kill the victim because of an outstanding debt.

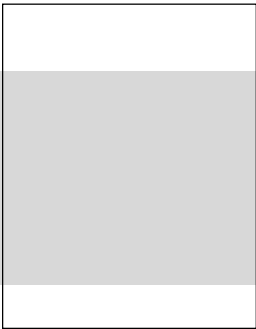
In 2010, Barber testified that his testimony at Wolfe’s trial was false, and that Wolfe had nothing to do with the murder. The conviction was overturned by the District Court because the state had withheld crucial evidence from Wolfe’s lawyers. The Court of

Appeals had upheld that ruling earlier.

In the current ruling, Judge Thacker, writing in dissent, would have barred any reprosecution: “The misconduct of the Original Prosecuting Team has tainted this case to the extent that Wolfe’s due process rights are all but obliterated...The Commonwealth’s misconduct has continued far too long, and the cumulative misconduct permeating this case has tainted it in such a way that it is doubtful Wolfe will receive a fair and just trial. Enough is enough.”

For More Info, go to:

<http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/us-court-appeals-allows-re-trial-justin-wolfe-despite-states-misconduct>



Terry Steinber, Justin’s mother, was our guest at our Annual Chili Feed in March



Chefs and Judges for the 2012 Fish Fry: (l-r) Jana Varrati, Rais Bhuiyan, Eric Kross, Rich Curtner, Galen Paine, Paul Malin, Bob Bacon, Rep. Lindsey Holmes, Fred Dewey, Rep. Les Gara and Kathy Harris.



Please keep AADP posted on your mailing and email address changes.



Other Headlines:

More info. may be found on the Death Penalty Information Center website at <http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org>

▶ **Texas Court Affirms That Former Death Row Inmate Has Been Held for 33 Years With No Conviction** — Jerry Hartfield

▶ **Former County GOP Chair Says Death Penalty Violates Conservative Values** — Steve Monks, Durham County, North Carolina

▶ **Oregon Supreme Court Affirms Govenner’s Halt to all Executions**

▶ **Colorado’s Govenner Indefinitely Stayed the Execution of Nathan Dunlap** In ordering the stay, Gov. Hickenlooper said, “It is a legitimate question whether we as a state should be taking lives,” and referred to the death penalty as an “inequitable system.” — **Denver Post**

▶ **Texas 500th Execution Took Place on June 25th**
Texas stands on the brink of an appalling milestone in its death penalty history: the execution of the 500th person since 1982. Kimberly McCarthy was the 500th person put to death by lethal injection since the resumption of executions. This figure stands far and above any other state — and most countries.

Bill Pelke and Kathy Harris attended the 20th Annual Fast & Vigil Against the Death Penalty at the Supreme Court June 29th through July 2nd.
“Like” the Fast & Vigil at:
<http://www.facebook.com/fastandvigil>



Please “like” our Facebook page:

Concerned Alaskans Against the Death Penalty

Congratulations!

Barb Hood retired from state service in June. Pictured with Barb are Vicki Burnham (l) and Kathy Harris (r).

Alaskans Against the Death Penalty

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