



Profound Reminders

Last month, the Registry team attended the Innocence Network conference in Phoenix, Arizona. This was the 20th such gathering of the network, and it brought together an extraordinary group of about 1,000 attendees: attorneys, academics, non-profit leaders, social workers, therapists, and of course—exonerees and their families.

During the conference, we presented a behind-the-scenes look at our website and database, explaining to a standing-room only crowd about our methodology and its uses.

Approximately 300 exonerees attended the conference, which gave us an opportunity to meet many of the men and women whose cases we have published in the Registry. At our table in the lobby of the conference center, a steady stream of exonerees stopped by to read their summaries and meet us for the first time in person. Some wanted their photos taken with us. In some instances, they read their summaries for the first time, and the experience was moving for them and for us.



The Registry's Maurice Possley and Barbara O'Brien with exoneree Marvin Cotton.

Because of our academic-research protocols, we do not directly contact exonerees while researching their cases. Our interactions at the conference offered profound reminders

that our website and database are so much more than numbers and stories on a website. They represent the hard-fought freedoms of thousands of individuals.

We've also just released our 2022 Annual Report, which provides detailed information on the cases we published last year, as well as a special report on "no crime" exonerations.

READ THE REPORT

Eight Exonerations Published in April

In 2015, [James Harris III](#) was convicted of a double murder in Lindenwold, New Jersey, and sentenced to 75 years in prison. A motion for new trial based on a new witness identifying someone else as the likely killer was denied. In 2018, Harris was granted a new trial because prejudicial evidence was erroneously admitted. The case was dismissed in 2023.

During an investigation of Larry Nassar's serial sexual abuse of teenage gymnasts, [Kathy Klages](#) a gymnastics coach at Michigan State University, was convicted in 2020 of lying to investigators about a conversation that allegedly took place 21 years earlier. She was exonerated in 2022, when an appellate court ruled that the allegedly false responses to investigators' questions were immaterial to the investigation.

In 2000, [Richard Kwil](#) was sentenced to 30 years in prison for a murder in Chicago, Illinois. He was exonerated in 2023 based on evidence that he falsely confessed and that a corrupt detective coerced false statements from witnesses and co-defendants.

[Steven Lazar](#) was convicted of murder in 2010 in the death of an elderly man in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was exonerated in 2023 after a federal judge ruled the state had failed to disclose

In 1992, [Lee Harris](#) was sentenced to 90 years in prison for the murder of a graduate student in Chicago in 1989. His conviction was vacated, and the case was dismissed in 2023 based on voluminous evidence that police officers falsified evidence, intimidated witnesses, and falsely claimed that Harris confessed.

[Sheldon Thomas](#) was convicted in 2006 of the murder of a 14-year-old boy in Brooklyn, New York. He was exonerated in 2023 after an investigation by the Kings County District Attorney's Office found that the police had targeted Thomas, and falsely testified about how he came to be arrested even though an eyewitness identified a different man with the same name as the shooter.

In 1996, [David Wright](#) was sentenced to life in prison for a double murder in Chicago, Illinois, based largely on a confession after he was falsely implicated in the crime by his brother. Wright was exonerated in 2023 based on evidence that he was physically abused during his interrogation and the detectives in his case had committed similar misconduct in dozens of other cases.

In 2006, [Gregory Molette](#) pled guilty to possession of marijuana in Chicago, Illinois and was sentenced to two years in prison. He was exonerated in 2020 based

evidence bolstering Lazar's claim that someone else committed the crime.

on evidence that he had been framed by corrupt police officers.

With your support, the National Registry of Exonerations can protect the innocent by preventing false convictions.

We find the stories. We painstakingly search for every false conviction in the United States that is overturned and meets our criteria for exoneration. We gather the information, study the cases, and code the data, fueling the most comprehensive public database of exonerations that exists.

We tell the stories. One by one, we write and share the human stories behind each individual exoneration. We bear witness to these incredible injustices to ensure that they are remembered.

And we count the stories. Thousands of exonerees. Tens of thousands of years lost to wrongful incarceration. Untold costs paid by our communities. This independent collection of data allows us to understand how false convictions occur and prevent them from happening in the future.

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