



THE NATIONAL REGISTRY OF EXONERATIONS



Patricia Cummings, a national leader in the innocence movement and the former supervisor of the Conviction Integrity and Special Investigations Unit at the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, is joining the National Registry of Exonerations as its first executive director.

Cummings will work with the Registry's team of editors and staff to build on the organization's 10

years of achievements in policy-oriented research on wrongful convictions.

Barbara O'Brien, the Registry's editor and a professor at the Michigan State University College of Law, said Cummings was hired after a nationwide search. "As the Registry enters its second decade, our work is more urgent than ever," O'Brien said. "Patricia Cummings is a true champion for the falsely convicted. She has the breadth of experience, the track record of accomplishment, and the earned respect of her peers. There's no one better to help us reach a wider audience and increase our impact."

Cummings said: "Through my work as both a prosecutor and defense attorney over the last decade, I have seen firsthand how the Registry has almost singlehandedly created a new awareness of the fallibilities of our criminal legal system — an awareness that comes directly from the publicizing and tracking of wrongful convictions. Even though part of the fabric of our criminal legal system has always included a commitment to shine a light on injustice, the human and legal stories told by the Registry demonstrate there is much work to be done to fulfill that commitment. I am

honored to join the NRE team in its continuing efforts to fulfill that commitment.”

Prior to her work in Philadelphia, where she led a Conviction Integrity Unit (CIU) that produced 24 exonerations in four years, Cummings was the Director of Policy and Litigation for the Innocence Project of Texas and General Counsel for the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association. She has also led the CIU for the Dallas County District Attorney’s Office, one of the pioneers in the prosecutorial reexamination of wrongful convictions.

Cummings began her career as a briefing attorney for the Eighth District Court of Appeals in El Paso, Texas, and then went to work as the County Juvenile Prosecutor at the Williamson County Attorney’s Office in Georgetown, Texas. She later worked in private practice and taught at the Criminal Defense Clinic at the University of Texas, School of Law.

Cummings has advised numerous district attorneys on best practices for CIUs. She is a frequent lecturer at law schools and legal conferences, and has testified before state and federal panels on a wide range of criminal-justice issues. Cummings grew up in El Paso, Texas and is a graduate of the University of Texas and the University of Houston Law Center.

The National Registry of Exonerations is a shared research project of the Newkirk Center for Science & Society at the University of California, Irvine, the University of Michigan Law School, and the Michigan State University College of Law. Founded in 2012, the Registry is the nation’s foremost archive of wrongful convictions. Its main Registry, with nearly 3,100 cases, collects data and publishes summaries on the exonerations of innocent criminal defendants since 1989. A separate database records exonerations prior to 1989. The Registry’s newest project, the Groups Registry, records cases where multiple defendants were wrongfully convicted based on systemic official misconduct.

You can read the Registry’s annual report, released April 12, 2022, [here](#).

EVERY STORY COUNTS.