



*GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY*

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The Honorable J. Kevin Stitt  
Governor of Oklahoma  
2300 N. Lincoln Blvd.  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

**Re: Letter on behalf of Julius Jones**

March 11, 2020

Dear Governor Stitt,

I am a Professor of Government and Law at Georgetown University, as well as the founding director of the Prisons and Justice Initiative. I am also an attorney and member of the NY Bar.

One of my professional activities involves teaching an undergraduate course called “Prison Reform Project,” informally known as “Making an Exoneree.” It is a very non-traditional course in every respect, as my co-instructor Marty Tankleff himself spent over 17 years in prison for a crime he did not commit, before being exonerated. Our students explore and reinvestigate potential wrongful conviction cases—researching the cases, interviewing witnesses and experts, traveling to prison to meet their “client,” and creating a video documentary in support of the person’s potential exoneration. If we determine that a wrongful conviction took place, we become public advocates for the reversal of this injustice.

The 2018 version of the course resulted in the exoneration and release of Valentino Dixon, who had served 27 years in prison, and who would still be behind bars if not for our program. To achieve such a successful outcome so quickly—he walked out of prison only four months after the semester had ended—was miraculous, but also testament to the

incredible work of our students, who uncovered critical new evidence in the case and made a strong case for exoneration and release.

Since the exoneration of Valentino Dixon, we have been inundated with potential wrongful conviction cases. We vet them very carefully, and I am confident that we reach an accurate assessment of the particular cases that require another look. Indeed, several of our other cases are now being reviewed by the Conviction Integrity Units in other states, and we anticipate having future exonerations in the near future.

Our 2020 class reviewed the case of Julius Jones, and for many reasons it was at the top of our list. At Mr. Jones' request, however, we decided not to pursue it this semester while the clemency review process is underway. Should it be unsuccessful—which we very much hope will not be the case—we would likely take the case on next year.

I would like to add that I personally visited Mr. Jones on death row in October 2019, and we have had many subsequent phone conversations. I find him to be remarkably composed, intelligent, thoughtful, curious, sensitive, and compassionate—despite spending two decades in some of the most inhumane and inhuman conditions imaginable, while on death row for a crime he did not commit. Mr. Jones has not let bitterness or anger overtake him. He just hopes and prays that he will get a chance to reclaim his life and liberty one day, hopefully soon.

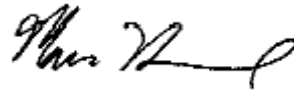
I understand that a full exoneration requires going through the legal process. I am writing here to request your support for another avenue towards freedom and justice for Mr. Jones. I strongly support Mr. Jones' request for clemency, even though he has never and will never acknowledge guilt or show remorse for a crime he did not commit. But clemency involves as a primary factor the state's recognition that a person does not pose even the slightest risk to public safety. And I have the utmost faith and absolute certainty that Mr. Jones not only does *not* represent any such risk, but on the contrary that he will be a force for good. He has all of the markers that would predict successful reentry: work skills and education, close-knit family waiting for him, personal character, dedication, and commitment. Moreover, Mr. Jones will positively influence those around him—whether in his family, community, or wider society—because he is a gentle and caring person, one who has no bitterness or resentment, and who embodies peace, tranquility, and love.

As you consider this request, and as you read the letters in support of Mr. Jones' application, I urge you to especially consider the warmth and deep affection that his supporters—including myself—have for him. Julius Jones has so much to offer and contribute to society in the years that remain for him on earth. If given the chance, he will not only be a good citizen, but he will make those who believed in him very proud.

I hope that you will find these remarks helpful, and that you will look favorably on Mr. Julius Jones' request, thus allowing him to rejoin his family and society, and to make the most of his talents and abilities.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marc Morjé Howard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Marc Morjé Howard, J.D., Ph.D.  
Professor of Government and Law