



31ST Awards Dinner

MAY 4, 2023

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

SPECIAL WELCOME

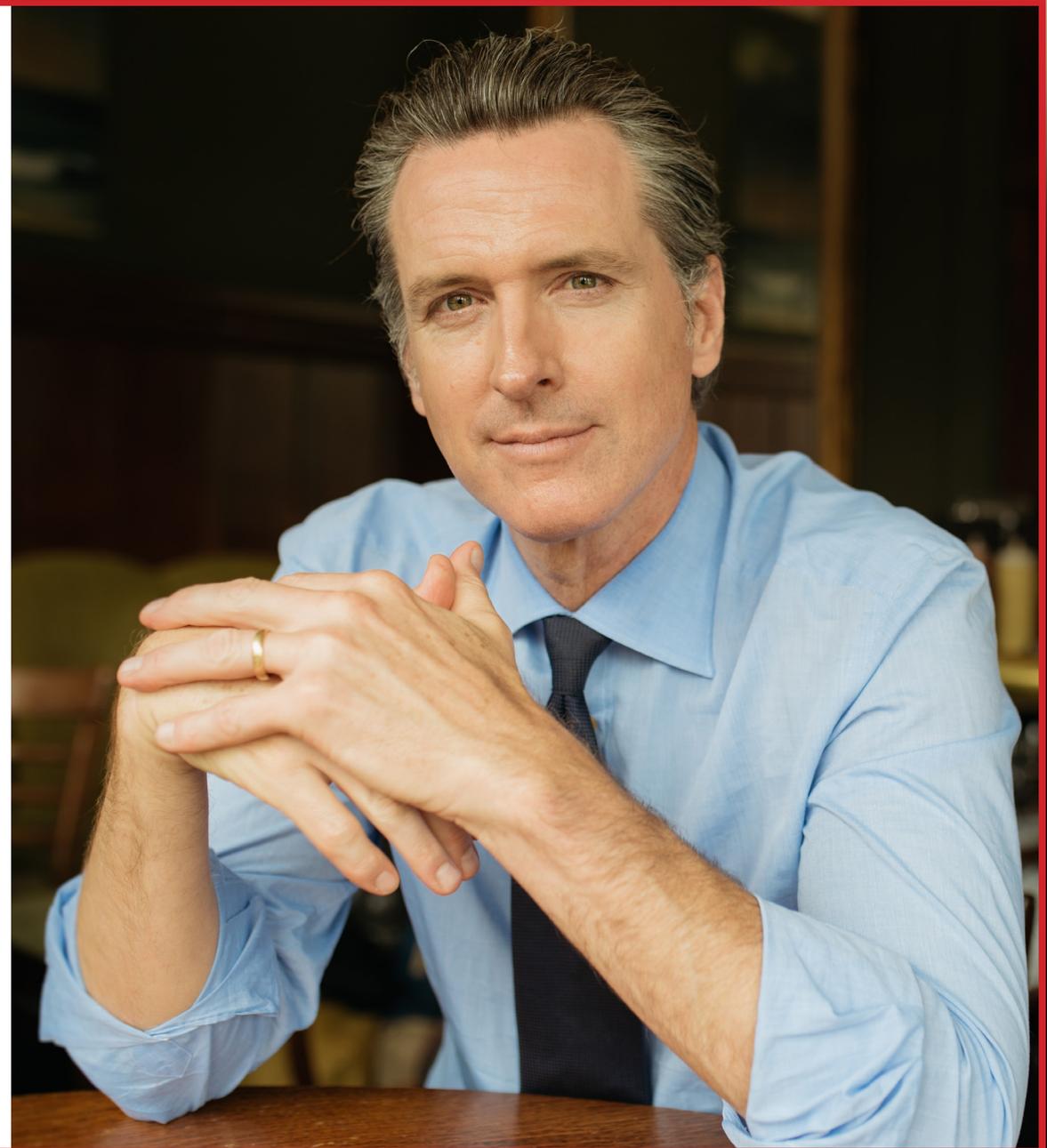
Governor Gavin Newsom

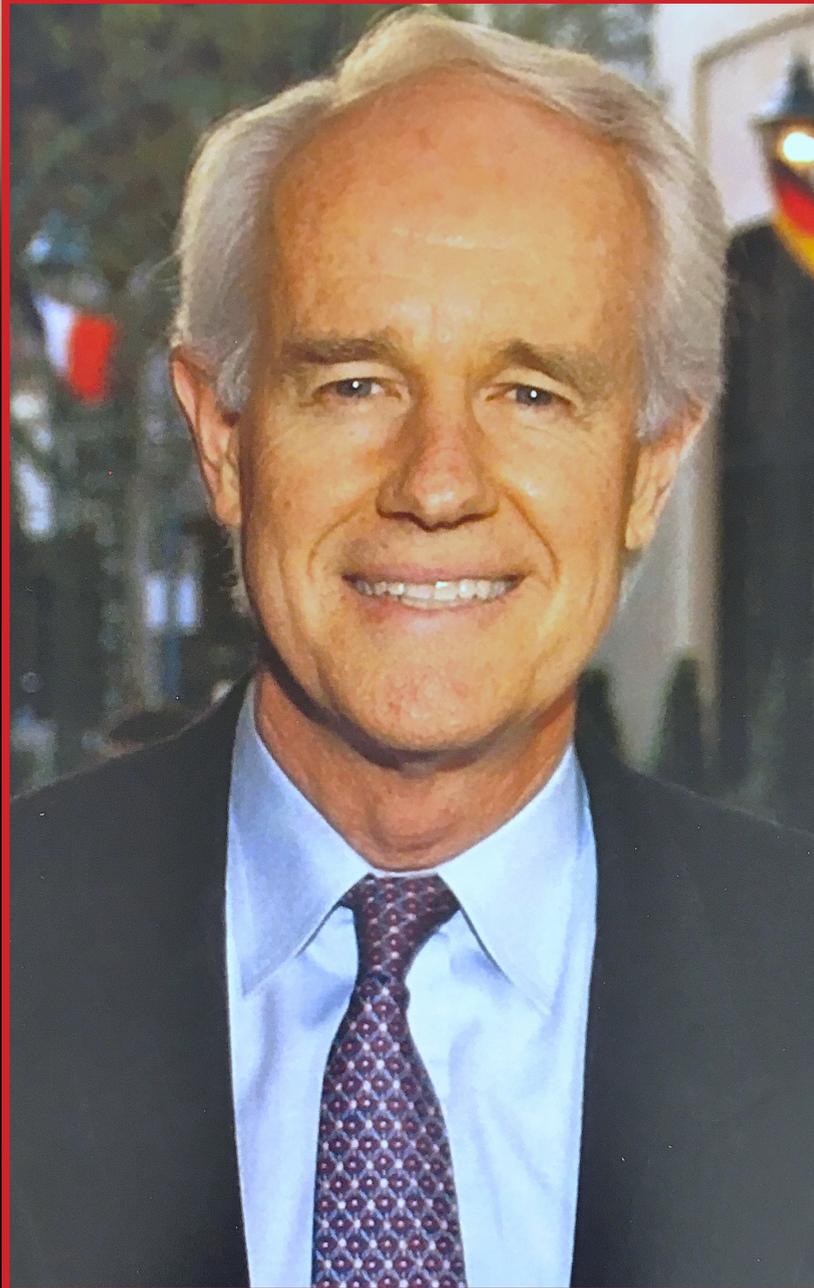
Gavin Newsom is the Governor of California, former Lieutenant Governor of California, and former Mayor of San Francisco.

Newsom is widely recognized for his willingness to lead – repeatedly developing, advocating, and implementing innovative and groundbreaking solutions to some of our most challenging issues. On a wide range of topics including same-sex marriage, gun safety, marijuana, the death penalty, universal health care, access to preschool, technology, criminal justice reform, and the minimum wage, Newsom stuck his neck out and did the right thing, which often led to sweeping changes when his policies were ultimately accepted, embraced, and replicated across the state and nation.

Newsom's top priorities for his administration are tackling our state's affordability crisis, creating inclusive economic growth and opportunity for every child, and standing up for California values — from civil rights, to immigration, environmental protection, access to quality schools at all levels, and justice.

Governor Newsom is married to Jennifer Siebel Newsom. They have four children: Montana, Hunter, Brooklynn, and Dutch.





Mike Farrell

Welcome to Death Penalty Focus' 31st Annual Awards Event

DPF was founded in 1988. 35 states had the death penalty, and public opinion strongly favored state killing. Four years later, when we held our first annual event, 36 states had the death penalty, and public support had increased even more. Even so, we gathered to recommit and re-energize, determined that by educating, advocating, and organizing, we would eventually abolish capital punishment in America.

Today, 23 states have no death penalty; Oregon, California, and Pennsylvania have moratoria, while Ohio and Arizona's governors have put a "hold" on state killing. We are thus in the majority. And our federal government has declared a moratorium on federal executions while it reviews its capital punishment process.

Last year, 55% of those polled supported state killing, but when given the option of life without parole instead of death, 60% chose life.

So, we've made progress but we still have much to do. States with moratoria or holds are an election away from a new governor who might be eager to restart the machinery of death. Florida, for example, now allows only 8 jurors out of 12 to declare a death sentence. And despite its moratorium, our federal government has been inconsistent in charging the death penalty and silent on the issue of clemency for the 43 individuals now on federal death row.

Still, our progress is undeniable; the end of the death penalty is closer than ever. Thanks to all of your tireless efforts and support, we will end state killing sooner rather than later.

The eminent naturalist, Rachel Carson, once said, "Man's attitude toward nature is today critically important because we have now acquired a fateful power to alter and destroy nature." She wasn't talking about our issue, of course, but I think it applies. She went on, "We are challenged as mankind has never been before, to prove our maturity and our mastery, not of nature, but of ourselves."

Onward.



31ST Awards Dinner

Welcome

We are so pleased to welcome you back in person at the Skirball Cultural Center for the 31st Death Penalty Focus Annual Awards Dinner. We gather to mark progress in the long struggle to end the death penalty, confident the tide is turning, knowing we are closer than ever to a national consensus that the death penalty is dead wrong.

Tonight we celebrate an incredibly dedicated and brilliant group of honorees, each of whom has brought the goal of ending state killing closer to a reality. Diann Rust-Tierney has devoted her entire professional career to ending capital punishment; Paula Mitchell, Andy Wilson and Maurice Hastings are the epitome of how dedicated lawyers and former death row exonerees can work together to win and advance the work of exonerating others, and Elizabeth Bruenig has penned incisive arguments against the death penalty for The Atlantic.

We honor Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro for his refusal to issue execution warrants during his term and for his commitment to abolishing the death penalty in his state once and for all. His evolution on this issue, in the wake of the Tree of Life Synagogue murders, is extraordinary.

While we celebrate these champions, we also lift up the struggles of our allies in seven states, for the most part former slave states, who are pushing back against a rush to kill scores on death row, and in some cases add new categories for death or eliminate the requirement for a unanimous jury to impose a death sentence. Our allies there have not yet won their fight, but their tireless work demonstrates the courage and conviction that eventually will lead to abolition as it did in Virginia which we honored last year for doing just that! As we do each year, we pay tribute to those who have been wrongly convicted for their courage and tenacity.

We thank everyone who has contributed to this evening, including Governor Gavin Newsom, Paula Poundstone, New Directions Veterans Choir, Cedering Fox, Jason George, Rabbi Sharon Brous, Toni Trucks and Mike Farrell, and our incredibly dedicated volunteer Awards Event Committee.

When Governor Shapiro's son asked how it would be OK to kill someone as a punishment for killing someone, he could not answer. Neither can we, which is why we are here tonight.

We are so deeply grateful you are too.

Sherry Frumkin and Stephen Rohde, Co-Chairs, 2023 Annual Awards Dinner Committee



31ST Awards Dinner



Benediction – Rabbi Sharon Brous

Rabbi Sharon Brous is the senior and founding rabbi of IKAR, a Jewish community that launched in 2004 to reinvigorate Jewish practice and inspire people of faith to reclaim a soulful, justice-driven voice. Her 2016 TED talk, “Reclaiming Religion,” has been viewed by more than 1.5 million people.

In 2013, Brous blessed President Obama and Vice President Biden at the Inaugural National Prayer Service, and in 2021 returned to bless President Biden and Vice President Harris, and then led the White House Passover Seder with Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff. She was named #1 on the *Newsweek/The Daily Beast* list of most influential Rabbis in America, and has been recognized by *The Forward* and *Jerusalem Post* as one of the fifty most influential Jews.

Brous is in the inaugural cohort of Auburn Seminary’s Senior Fellows program, sits on the faculty of REBOOT, and serves on the International Council of the New Israel Fund and national steering committee for the Poor People’s Campaign.

Her forthcoming book, *The Amen Effect: Ancient Wisdom to Heal Our Hearts and Mend Our Broken World*, will be available for pre-order spring of 2023.

A graduate of Columbia University, she was ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary and lives in Los Angeles with her husband and three children.



Emcee – Paula Poundstone

Paula Poundstone is known for her smart, observational humor and spontaneous wit that has become the stuff of legend. Paula is the star of several HBO specials. She is a regular panelist on NPR's comedy news quiz, *Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me!* and is heard weekly on her comedy podcast, *Nobody Listens to Paula Poundstone*.

Also, an author, Paula's second book, *The Totally Unscientific Study Of The Search For Human Happiness* (Algonquin), was one of eight semi-finalists for The Thurber Prize for American Humor, the highest recognition of the art of humor writing in the United States. The audiobook was one of five finalists for the AUDIE Audio Book of the Year award.

Paula is the first female standup, in its 5th year, to win the cable ACE award for Best Comedy Special. She is the first female, in its 73rd year, to host The White House Correspondents Dinner. Paula is recognized in innumerable lists, documentaries, and literary compendiums noting influential standup comedians of our time.

Website: paulapoundstone.com



Host – Toni Trucks

Toni Trucks comes from a strong and varied acting background with roots in the theatre. Toni spent her early career in New York before making her television debut as the female lead on the SHOWTIME series *Barbershop*

Toni is currently starring on the CBS drama *SEAL Team* as “Lieutenant Lisa Davis”. Other television credits include *NCIS: New Orleans*, *Corporate*, *Made in Jersey*, *Franklin and Bash*, and *Grimm*

Her film credits include *Twilight: Breaking Dawn Part 2* and *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. Trucks also starred in the short films *The Shift*, *Scars*, *Scare Package* and *Good Eggs*.

An alumnus of both Interlochen Arts Academy and the University of Michigan’s Musical Theatre Program, Trucks is a Michigan Native with a vigorous family history of social justice activism.

Presenter – Mike Farrell

Best known for his eight years on M*A*S*H and five seasons on “Providence,” Mike Farrell is an actor, writer, director, and producer who made many TV films as well as the features “Dominick and Eugene” and “Patch Adams.” He continues to act in television, motion pictures, and on stage, where he periodically performs “Dr. Keeling’s Curve,” a one-person show.

For three years, he served as first vice president of the Screen Actors Guild and as a member of the Guild’s national board of directors.

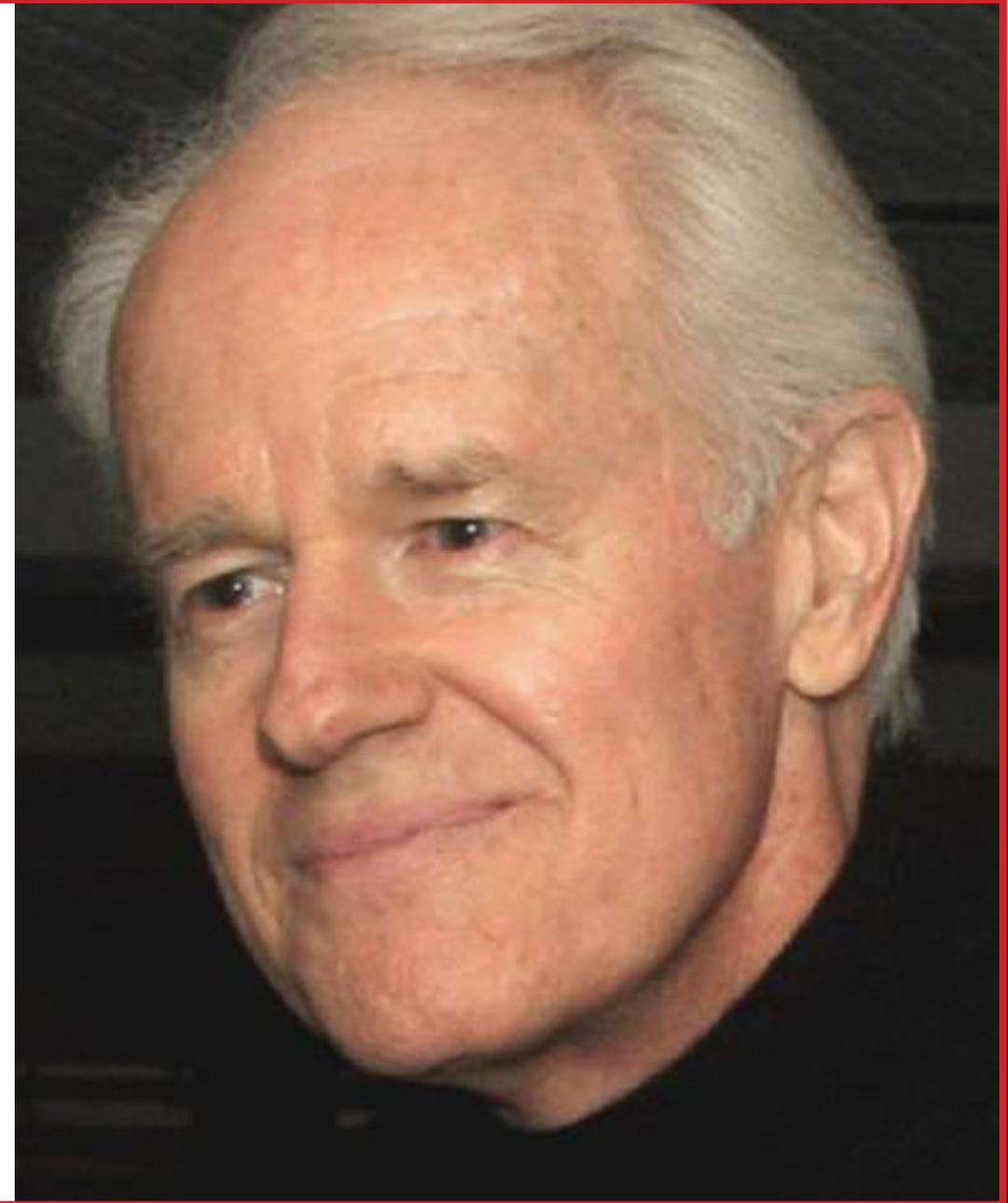
Beyond the world of entertainment, Farrell serves as spokesperson for Concern America, a refugee relief and development organization, and has, for the last 40 years, served as part of international human rights and peace delegations to El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, the then U.S.S.R., Paraguay, Chile, Israel, the Occupied Territories, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Czechoslovakia, Somalia, Kenya, Croatia, Bosnia, Cuba, Rwanda, Zaire, Tanzania, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Samoa.

His involvement in Central America led to his association with what was then Americas Watch, now Human Rights Watch. He subsequently helped establish the California Committee of Human Rights Watch in the late ‘80s and served as its co-chair for ten years.

Opposing the war in Iraq led to his co-founding Artists United to Win Without War and representing the anti-war position across the U.S. and in the media.

A life-long opponent of the death penalty, Farrell has “seen too many death rows.” President of the board of Death Penalty Focus since 1994, he believes that state killing brutalizes the society that practices it. He is confident that state, national, and worldwide abolition is inevitable, and has been deeply involved in efforts to end the use of capital punishment for decades, most recently meeting with government leaders in Samoa on behalf of the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, encouraging them to ratify the 2nd Optional Protocol to the ICCPR.

Farrell is the author of two books: *Just Call Me Mike: A Journey to Actor and Activist*, and *Of Mule and Man*.





Honoree – Paula Mitchell

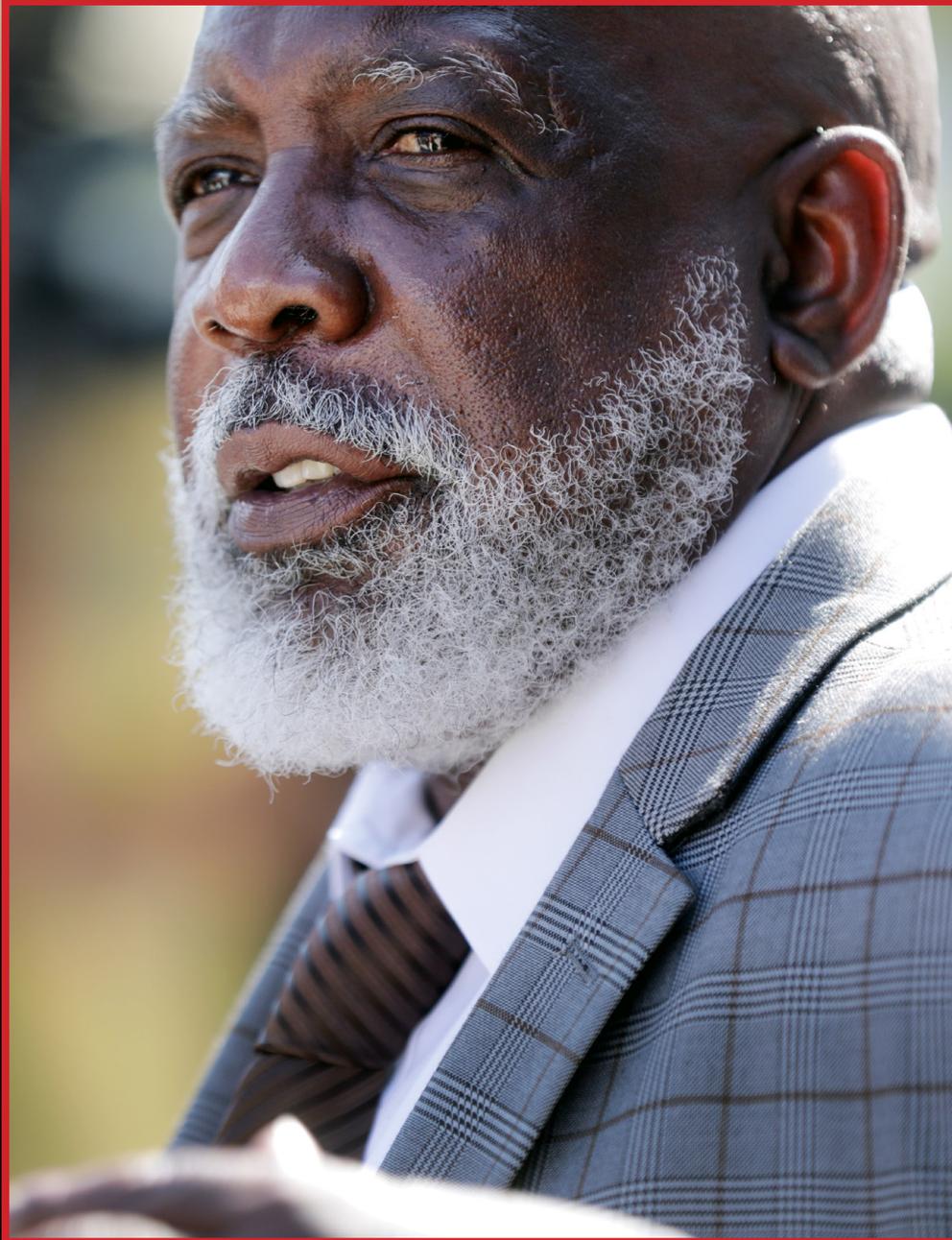
Paula Mitchell is the director of the Los Angeles Innocence Project at Cal State LA, joining LAIP after serving as the Legal Director at the Loyola Project for the Innocent at Loyola Law School for seven years.

Mitchell's work focuses on exonerating the wrongly convicted, exposing systemic flaws in the criminal justice system, improving standards for using forensic evidence in courtrooms, and advocating for criminal justice reforms needed to increase fairness in the system.

In addition to her work at LAIP, Mitchell has taught law school courses in habeas corpus, prisoner civil rights litigation, and appellate advocacy. She has also written extensively on California's flawed and costly death penalty system.

Before joining LAIP, Mitchell was Appellate Counsel at Reed Smith LLP, representing clients in all stages of civil and criminal appeals. She clerked for six years for Senior Judge Arthur L. Alarcon of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. She reviewed over 200 prison civil rights appeals and habeas corpus petitions filed by individuals incarcerated in California state prisons.

Mitchell earned a BA, cum laude, from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and an MA from the London School of Economics and Political Science. She is a graduate of Loyola Law School. A former Chair of the State Bar's Committee on Appellate Courts, she also served on the board of Death Penalty Focus and currently serves on the board of the California Appellate Project.



Honoree – Andrew Wilson

Andrew Leander Wilson Jr. was convicted in 1984 of a murder he did not commit. Twenty-nine years old, married, and the father of a young girl, Andy was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

He spent the next 32 years fighting for his freedom, steadfastly maintaining his innocence, while the actual perpetrator remained free. With the help of Los Angeles Innocence Project Director Paula Mitchell, he continued his efforts and was finally exonerated in 2017 and released.

After years of additional litigation, Andy was compensated for his wrongful conviction and incarceration.

Throughout his long years of imprisonment, Andy remained committed to his determination to be of service to others. Now, he's continuing his mission as the Los Angeles Innocence Project's founding donor, laying the groundwork through his generous support to continue the critical work of freeing the many innocent individuals in California's prisons.

Many different errors caused Andy's wrongful conviction – all of them preventable. These errors included false and mistaken eyewitness testimony, police misconduct, and the failure of prosecutors to disclose favorable evidence to him and his attorneys. Through its partnership with the California Forensic Science Institute's scientists and students, the Los Angeles Innocence Project's work will improve the reliability of scientific evidence in California courts and work to prevent and correct wrongful convictions in the state.

Andy's commitment to be of service has been realized.



Honoree – Maurice Hastings

Maurice Hastings was convicted in Los Angeles of murder and two attempted murders he did not commit. At his 1986 trial, the prosecutor sought the death penalty, but the jury hung. He was convicted at his second trial in 1988 and, although the prosecutor again sought the death penalty, the jury returned a sentence of life without the possibility of parole.

Hastings always maintained his innocence and even refused a plea deal that would have allowed parole if he admitted to the crime.

He tried for years to get DNA testing beginning in 2000 but was repeatedly denied by the LA district attorney's office. Finally, Paula Mitchell, director of the Los Angeles Innocence Project, interceded and, working with the District Attorney's Conviction Integrity Unit, was able to have the biological evidence in his case DNA tested in June 2022. In early October, the test results wholly excluded Hastings and implicated a man convicted of committing similar crimes who had been serving time in prison. (He died in prison in 2000.)

On October 20, the district attorney's office joined the Los Angeles Innocence Project in asking the court to vacate Hastings' conviction and release Hastings from prison immediately. The court agreed.

No one could fault Hastings if he were bitter toward a justice system that sent him to prison for 38 years for a murder and two attempted murders he didn't commit. But he is determined to live the life stolen from him when he was 31 with joy.

At a news conference called by Los Angeles District Attorney George Gascón to announce his conviction had been vacated, Hastings said, "I prayed for many years that this day would come. I am not pointing fingers; I am not standing up here a bitter man, I just want to enjoy my life now while I have it."

On March 1, the court found Hastings factually innocent of the crimes for which he was convicted.



Honoree – Diann Rust-Tierney

Diann Rust-Tierney served as the Executive Director of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty from 2005 to 2021. In that role, she developed, implemented, and coordinated national policy and legal strategy to end the US death penalty.

Professor Rust-Tierney served as the Robert F. Drinan S.J. Visiting Professor for Human Rights for the academic year 2021-2022, focusing on the relationship between capital punishment and the legacy of the American racial caste system.

She is now the Georgetown University Racial Justice Institute Executive Director and Adjunct Professor of Law. As a Georgetown Law Human Rights Institute Fellow, she teaches a seminar on Human Rights Advocacy: Lessons Learned from the Campaign to End the Death Penalty.

Professor Rust-Tierney has testified before Congress and spoken extensively on the death penalty, race, women's rights, policy advocacy, and human and civil rights campaigns.

Professor Rust-Tierney earned her JD from the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law and her BA from the College of Wooster. She has been a member of SAG-AFTRA since 2001 and has appeared in television, film, theatre, and commercial projects.



Presenter – Caitlin Flanagan

Caitlin Flanagan is a staff writer at the *Atlantic* where she has published her work for two decades. She is the author of the books *To Hell with All That* and *Girl Land*, and of the forthcoming collection *On Thinking for Yourself*. Her writing has been widely anthologized, including in *Best American Essays* and *Best American Magazine Writing*. She has received a National Magazine Award and been a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.

The Atlantic Monthly was founded by a group of abolitionists in 1857. In its 168-year history, it endorsed only three presidential candidates, the first of whom was Abraham Lincoln. It has continuously sought to uphold its founders' vision: "*The Atlantic Monthly* will be the organ of no party or clique but will honestly endeavor to be the exponent of what its conductors believe to be the American idea," and it placed itself in league "with all people in favor of Freedom, National Progress and Honor."



Honoree — Elizabeth Bruenig

Elizabeth Bruenig is a writer at *The Atlantic*, where she arrived after stints at *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. In 2019, she was named a Pulitzer finalist in feature writing for her investigation of a gang rape that took place at her high school in Arlington, Texas. Liz now reports on capital punishment, criminal justice, and American violence. She lives in Connecticut with her husband and two daughters and two cats.



Honoree – Gov. Josh Shapiro

In February, three months after he was elected Governor of Pennsylvania, Josh Shapiro announced he would not issue any execution warrants during his term and “when an execution warrant comes to my desk, I will sign a reprieve each and every time.”

And he called on the state legislature to work with him to abolish the death penalty because “The Commonwealth shouldn’t be in the business of putting people to death. Period.”

Shapiro notes that “My approach to capital punishment has evolved over time,” and while he wasn’t opposed to capital punishment when he was first elected Attorney General in 2017, “When the first capital cases came to my desk in the AG’s office, I found myself repeatedly unwilling to seek the death penalty. When my son asked me why it was OK to kill someone as a punishment for killing someone, I couldn’t look him in the eye and explain why.”

But it was after he met with family members of the victims of the 2018 Tree of Life synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh, in which 11 people were killed, and six were wounded, and they told him that “even after all the pain and anguish, they did not want the killer put to death,” that he was fully convinced that he needed to lead the effort to abolish the state’s death penalty.

“This is a fundamental statement of morality. Of what’s right and wrong. And I believe Pennsylvania must be on the right side of this issue,” he says.

A native Pennsylvanian, Shapiro was a county commissioner, a state representative, and a two-term Attorney General from 2017 - 2023. He was elected governor in November 2022 and assumed office in January 2023.

He and his wife, Lori, have three sons and a daughter and live in Montgomery County.



Cedering Fox

Cedering Fox is the Founder and Artistic Director of WordTheatre® operating in Los Angeles, New York, and London, where she directs top film, television and theatre actors in original live productions featuring literary works by the world's finest contemporary authors. A successful voiceover artist, she has been the on-air announcer for live awards shows such as *The Oscars*, *The People's Choice Awards*, *The Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song*, and *The Democratic National Convention*. She is also the go-to announcer for many non-broadcast events such as *The Governors Awards for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences*, *The Producers Guild Awards*, *The Lumiere Awards* and *The Oscar Nominees Luncheon*. Ms. Fox has voiced hundreds of promotional spots, several award winning documentaries, countless national commercials and political spots, and is the female voice of numerous local affiliate stations. Cedering regularly donates her voice to other valued charitable organizations.



Jason George

For over a decade, Jason George has played Dr. Ben Warren on *Grey's Anatomy* and *Station 19*. Over his career, Jason has done well over 50 guest star roles and been a series regular on 10 different prime time shows. He's also starred in films like *Barbershop* with Anthony Anderson and Ice Cube, *Breaking In* with Gabrielle Union and *Playing For Keeps* with Gerard Butler. Jason has served over twenty years on the boards of SAG, AFTRA or the now merged SAG-AFTRA. He's also helped negotiate the last twenty years of SAG-AFTRA's contract for Primetime Television and Theatrical Film, specifically championing diversity and protections for actors. Jason spends much of his spare time fighting for Social Justice, better representation, and common sense gun laws. He currently serves as chair of SAG-AFTRA's national Diversity Advisory committee, speaking about the status and need for diversity in media. He's worked with grassroots movements like Reform LA Jails and he serves on the Creative Council of Everytown and the board of 97 Percent, two grassroots anti-gun violence organizations.



New Directions Veterans Choir

The New Directions Veterans Choir is an award winning a cappella group that sings renditions of doo-wop, soul, traditional gospel and popular music. The Choir consists of current and former residents of New Directions' transitional facility and who have served proudly in the United States Military. Another element they have in common: following their service to our country, they became shelterless. The New Directions facility gave them hope and direction.

The New Directions Veterans Choir recently performed for NBC's "America's Got Talent" and has been featured on the NBC Nightly News and E! Entertainment Television. They have performed at over 100 venues and events, including "The Donny and Marie Show," the Democratic National Convention and for members of the United States Congress.

This group of men and women have something else in common: they can sing!

In Memoriam - Harry Belafonte

Harry Belafonte, a hero of the civil rights movement, a phenomenally successful singer and actor, and a social and criminal justice activist, died in April at his home on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. He was 96.

Belafonte was born in Harlem to West Indian immigrants and “almost single-handedly ignited a craze for Caribbean music,” the *New York Times* noted in his obituary. His album “Calypso,” which included the hits “Day-O” and “Jamaica Farewell,” was “said to be the first album by a single artist to sell more than a million copies,” according to the *Times*.

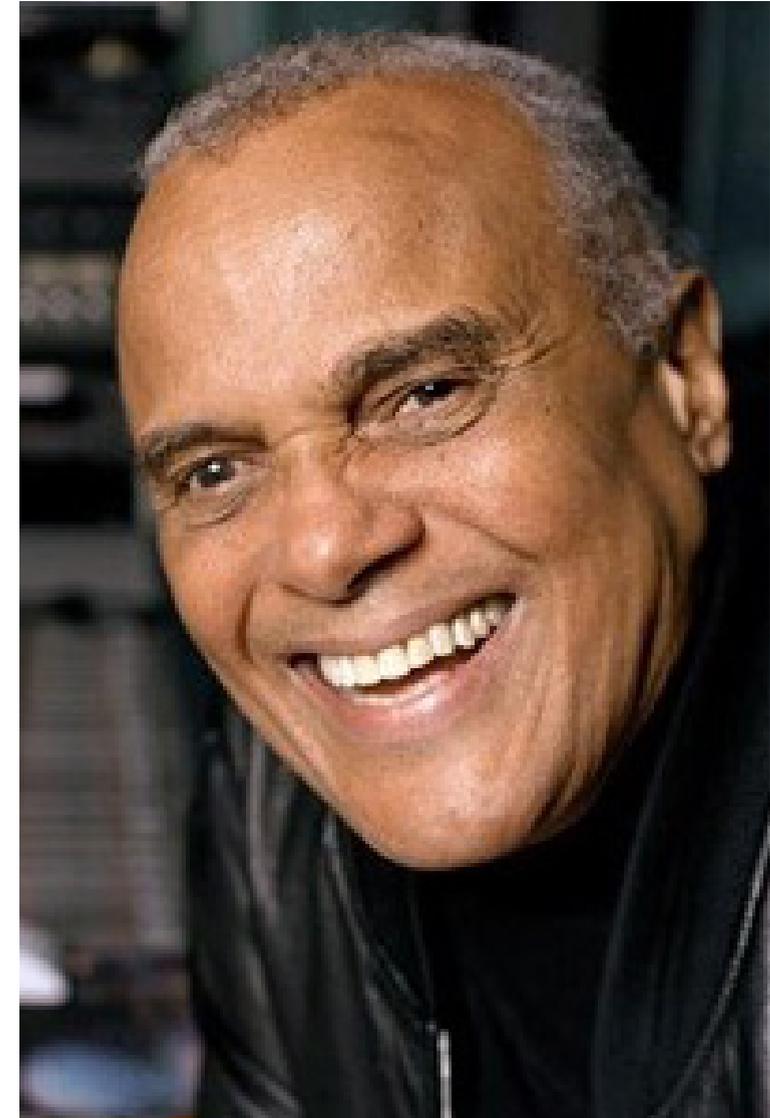
He had an equally successful acting career on stage and screen. He was awarded a Kennedy Center Honor, the National Medal of Arts, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award, and a Grammy lifetime achievement award.

He was a warrior in the struggle for racial justice, working with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., funding the launch of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, helping to organize a cultural boycott of South Africa, and participating in the March on Washington in 1963, the *Times* reports.

In his later years, he got involved in New York politics, publicly criticizing George W. Bush administration policies in 2002, particularly its handling of civil liberties issues, campaigning for Bill de Blasio in the New York mayor’s race in 2013, and speaking out against the presidential candidacy of Donald Trump in 2016.

“He was a dear personal friend and an inspiration,” said DPF President Mike Farrell. “It’s like a mountain has been moved. He was an irreplaceable human being, and I am stunned by the loss. Harry was not only a champion of the civil rights movement, he was a hero to much of the world.”

Harry Belafonte is survived by his third wife, Pamela Frank; his children, Adrienne Biesemeyer and Shari Belafonte, Gina Belafonte and David, a stepdaughter, Sarah Frank; a stepson, Lindsey Frank, eight grandchildren, and three step-grandchildren.



In Memoriam - Leo Frumkin



Leo Frumkin's dedication to social justice began with an arrest at age 17 for leading a walkout of his high school in East Los Angeles in protest of an appearance by the fascist Gerald LK Smith. He liked to say that his activism usually resulted in getting thrown out of things. His Merchant Marine papers were lifted for his opposition to war; he was fired for refusing to cross a picket line at the LA radio station where he was a disc jockey; and the FBI tried and failed for several years to find a reason to arrest him for his union activism. Leo gave generously to countless civil liberties and social justice causes. He received the 2010 Death Penalty Focus Rose Elizabeth Bird Award for his life-long commitment to justice, ethics and progressive values.

In Memoriam - Aundre Herron



Former Death Penalty Focus board member Aundre Herron died at her San Francisco home in July. She was 69.

Born and raised in Missouri, Aundre earned a BA at Wellesley College and Master's and Juris Doctor degrees at Boston University. She began her career as a prosecutor and later became a defense attorney, ultimately serving as Senior Staff Attorney at California Appellate Project in San Francisco.

While Aundre spent most of her career defending those sentenced to death in California, her involvement in the criminal justice system was personal as well as professional. In 1994, Aundre's beloved older brother, Danny, was murdered. Because of what she called a "legal technicality," his killer went free. The tragedy gave her particular credibility when she argued against state killing, as she did at a California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice hearing in 2008. "A sense of revenge is a very legitimate emotion, but it is not a legitimate basis for public policy. And I think we denigrate our own noble ideals when we use revenge, and we use the public fist for the purpose of killing our fellow human beings when that really is not going to solve the problem. It certainly is not going to bring back the loved one that people have lost."

Aundre "was a force of nature," DPF President Mike Farrell wrote in a letter to the board and staff after her death. "A ferocious, capital D Defender of the disadvantaged and the dispossessed, [she] was a constant, powerful, and articulate enemy of the killing system, racism, bigotry in all forms, especially stupidity and mindlessness on the part of those in power.

"In many ways, a contradiction in terms, Aundre was also a one-legged gay black woman and stand-up comic whose wicked sense of humor thrilled audiences and knocked me out."

Aundre Herron is survived by her wife and partner (25 years), Katherine Martinez, of San Francisco; her sister Dannie Watson, "sister-cousins" Era Herron and Bettie Penny; her niece and nephew, Sitreva Willis and Adrien Herron, and their children Christian, Cameron, and Aubree.

In Memoriam - Gloria Killian



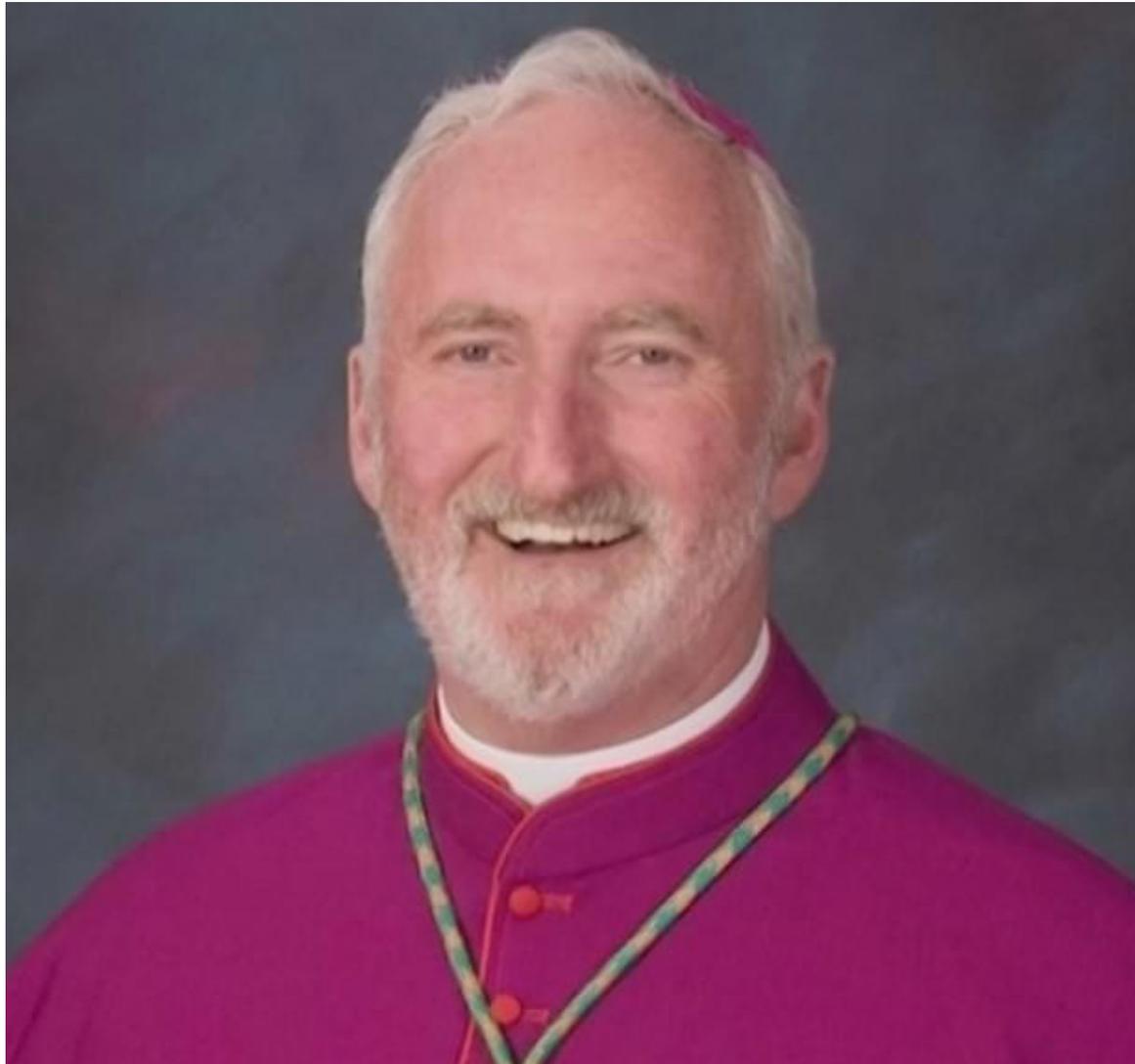
Gloria Killian, wrongly convicted and sentenced to 32 years to life in prison for murder and conspiracy in 1986, died in December at her home in San Jose, California, with her daughters Karen and Suzanne at her side. She was 86.

The only evidence against Killian was the testimony of a co-defendant, who had made a secret deal with the prosecution in exchange for a reduced sentence. In 1996, after Killian filed a federal petition for a writ of habeas corpus, the agreement between her co-defendant and the prosecution was discovered. Her co-defendant ultimately admitted that much of his testimony had been false, including his accusation that Killian was the “mastermind” of the crime.

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed her conviction, and she was released in 2002. after 16 years in prison. After her release, Killian co-authored a book, *Full Circle*, about her experiences and became executive director of the Action Committee for Women in Prison in Southern California.

Killian is survived by her four children and seven grandchildren.

In Memoriam - Bishop David G. O'Connell



Bishop David G. O'Connell, an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, died in February. He was 69 years old.

Bishop O'Connell, a native of Ireland, was named auxiliary bishop for the San Gabriel Pastoral Region in 2015. He had spent the entirety of his career as a priest in the Los Angeles area, a beloved figure for his work with immigrants and the underserved.

Bishop O'Connell was killed on February 18. A suspect, his housekeeper's husband, is in custody, but a motive has not been established.

At a memorial Mass in March, Los Angeles Archbishop José H. Gomez read a condolence message from Pope Francis. The Catholic newspaper, *Dialog*, reported that the Pope spoke of Bishop O'Connell's "efforts to uphold the sanctity and dignity of God's gift of life."

In Memoriam - Peter Pringle



Peter Pringle, wrongly convicted and sentenced to death for killing two police officers (gardai) in Ireland in 1980, died at his home in Galway on New Year's Eve. He was 84.

Pringle and two other men were sentenced to death for killing John Morley and Henry Byrne during a bank robbery in 1980. All three men had their sentences commuted to 40 years by then-President Patrick Hillary in 1981. They were among the last people sentenced to death before Ireland abolished its death penalty in 1990.

Pringle served just short of 15 years before the Court of Criminal Appeal “found his convictions to be unsafe and unsatisfactory” and exonerated him in 1995, according to the *Irish Times*.

In 1998, he met Sunny Jacobs, who was on a speaking tour in Ireland after being released from a Florida prison where, in 1976, she, too, had been sentenced to death for the murder of two police officers, a crime she didn't commit. She was released in 1992 after serving 17 years, five of them in solitary confinement. They were married in 2011.

In 2012, Pringle and Jacobs began welcoming exonerees into their home in western Ireland. In 2014, they expanded by establishing the Sunny Healing Retreat Center, employing a unique holistic approach to provide spiritual, emotional, and physical support to exonerees from all over the world. They opened a second living center for the wrongly convicted in Tampa, Florida, in 2018.

After Pringle's death, Jacobs told the *Independent*. i.e., “We loved simply and beautifully, and we never had an argument, as we resolved to allow each other to be who we were.”

In Memoriam - Donald Spoto



Author and former Death Penalty Focus board member Donald Spoto died in February in Denmark. He was 81.

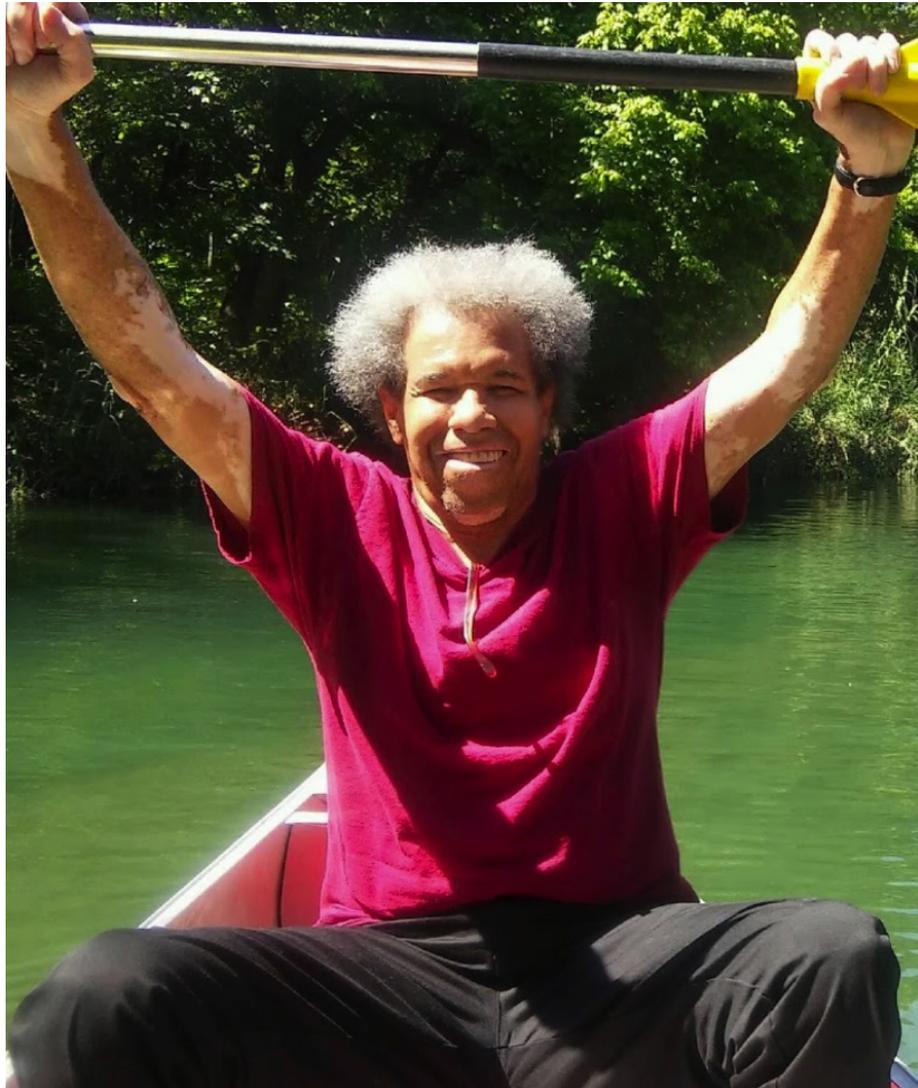
A prolific writer whose dozens of books included biographies of prominent men and women from the fields of politics, show business, and religion, he was as complex and brilliant as his many subjects.

He earned a master's and Ph.D. in New Testament studies at Fordham University and taught religion for a time before becoming a full-time writer, publishing books on a wide range of luminaries, including Jesus, Joan of Arc, Marilyn Monroe, and Alfred Hitchcock.

A lifelong opponent of capital punishment and a criminal and social justice advocate, Spoto served on the boards of Death Penalty Focus, Human Rights Watch, and the Youth Law Center. In 2000, DPF honored Spoto for his "selfless contributions and passionate dedication to ending the death penalty."

"His wit was a gift during board meetings and events," said DPF board member Fr. Chris Ponnet. "I celebrate him and his eternal peace."

In Memoriam - Albert Woodfox



Albert Woodfox, who spent 42 years in solitary confinement in Louisiana State Penitentiary (Angola Prison) for a crime he didn't commit before being freed in 2016, died in August of complications from Covid. He was 75.

Known as one of the "Angola Three," Woodfox was often arrested as a teenager in New Orleans and later in New York, where he joined the Black Panther Party. In 1972, while serving a 50-year sentence for armed robbery in Angola, he and another prisoner, Herman Wallace, also a member of the Black Panthers, were accused of killing a white guard, Brent Miller, and placed in solitary confinement by the warden. Despite a total lack of evidence against them, they were tried and convicted in January 1974. The two men spent more than 40 years in solitary confinement, each in a 6-by-9-foot cell for 23 hours per day,

(Robert Hillary King, arrested for a separate prison guard murder in Angola in 1973, and the third member of the Angola Three, was wrongfully convicted of murder and spent 29 years in solitary confinement. His conviction was overturned on appeal, and he was released in 2001 on a plea deal.)

Over the years, the shocking miscarriage of justice that defined the conviction and imprisonment of the Angola Three caught the attention of civil and criminal rights groups, activists, members of Congress, and prominent defense attorneys. Brent Miller's widow, Teenie Miller, became a surprise supporter and lent her name and voice to the large and concerted effort to free them.

They were released in stages: King in 2001, Wallace in 2013 (three days before he died), and Woodfox, on his 69th birthday, in 2016.

Woodfox was released in exchange for pleading no contest to a manslaughter charge in the killing of Miller. He almost didn't take the plea. He had promised himself he would never admit to a murder he didn't commit.

"If I made a deal, I'd have freedom. But I'd never get justice," he wrote in his 2019 memoir, *Solitary*. But he was 69 years old, and there was no guarantee that he'd be found innocent in a retrial. He had family, friends, and a life he had left more than 40 years earlier to rediscover. He made the "deal." But, he wrote, "There isn't a day that goes by that I don't think about breaking my word to take that plea."

The Rose Elizabeth Bird Commitment to Justice Award

The Rose Elizabeth Bird Commitment to Justice Award is meant to recognize those individuals who strive to uphold the ideals that Chief Justice Bird demonstrated throughout her career. As a public defender, she worked tirelessly on behalf of those without the means to defend themselves. As Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court, she championed a rational, independent judiciary, free from politics and willing to provide an ear to those otherwise unable to be heard. The recipient of this award shares with Chief Justice Bird an unwavering dedication to the fair and equal treatment of all citizens, regardless of their position in society.

Partial Past Recipient List

Chief Justice Rose Elizabeth Bird

First Lady Rosalynn Carter

Denise Foderaro

Gov. George Ryan

The late Justice Paul Stevens

Bryan Stevenson

John Van de Kamp

Abolition Award

Part of a long and noble tradition of abolitionist movements in the United States, most notably including the successful movement to abolish slavery, is the growing movement to abolish the death penalty. Both these movements have met with entrenched and fierce opposition that has only just been modulated, not overcome, with the passing of generations. The Abolition Award is given each year to an individual or group who inspires us to understand that the struggle to abolish the death penalty, however resisted, is a just and humane pursuit for which we can all take pride and from which humankind will benefit.

Partial Past Recipient List

Sir Richard Branson

Senator John Burton

Richard Dieter

Danny Glover

Senator Edward Kennedy

Nick McKeown

Sean Penn

Senator Bernie Sanders

Justice in the Arts Award

The Arts play a critical role in examining, clarifying and illuminating the complex issues of crime and punishment while reminding us of the fallibility of the human condition. DPF's Justice in the Arts Award goes to those special people who help enlarge society's understanding of human behavior, deepen its appreciation for human dignity, strengthen its dedication to human rights, and inspire our passion for justice through various modes of written, aural and visual communication.

Partial Past Recipient List

Joan Baez

Jackson Browne

James Cromwell

John Grisham

MC Hammer

David E. Kelley

Nancy Miller

Hilary Swank

“It reminds me of another old story. A man is walking along a country road, and he sees a farmer pulled over by a drainage ditch with a wagon. And he’s hitched up to that wagon a tired old horse that’s obviously blind. The farmer has a couple of hired hands with him and in order to clear out the ditch, they’re piling all kinds of things into this wagon, rocks, roots, garbage, tree stumps, boulders...it’s a huge heavy load. Finally, the farmer climbs up on the wagon, snaps the reins once at this pathetic old horse and says, ‘Hey, gidde up, Clyde!’ Horse doesn’t budge, doesn’t move at all. The farmer doesn’t seem to mind. He snaps the whip, pulls the reins again, says, ‘Hey, gidde up, Elba!’ Horse doesn’t move. Third time, ‘Gidde up Sunshine!’ That horse didn’t even look up. The guy’s watching the farmer, watching the blind horse, can’t figure it out. Then he hears the farmer say, ‘Gidde up, Dust!’ And suddenly, the decrepit old horse leans into his traces, digs his hooves into the dirt, puffs and strains and by some miracle he gets that wagon moving. Moving indeed, he moves it about a half mile, gets to the place where the farmer wants him to stop, and he stops. The guy watches all of this, follows the wagon and the farmer, and finally says to the farmer, ‘I can’t believe what I just saw. That was some load. That horse was blind wasn’t he? Why did you call him all those names? Don’t you know the damn horse’s name?’ The farmer looks at him and says, ‘Yeah, you’re right, he’s blind. And yeah I know his name. But do you think that horse would have dragged and pulled that big load if he knew he was alone?’ Tonight you have reassured me that even if I have to wear my glasses a little more often these days, I’m not yet a blind horse. And you have reassured me and all of us that none of us is working alone. Thank God.”

- Mario Cuomo, 1996 DPF Dinner Honoree

To Everyone at Death Penalty Focus - It has been such an honor to work alongside you in this struggle.

**We love you all.
Ed and Sarah**

With enormous gratitude to the honorees
and to all who fight to end the death penalty everywhere,
and a promise to every wrongly convicted person,
that while we can never repay your lost years,
we will never give up the fight to see this never happens again

Sherry Frumkin

You were our North Star

And you will live on in our hearts forever



Sherry, Sally, Mark, Alisa, Syndee and all the Frumkin family

Heartfelt thanks and appreciation to
Death Penalty Focus for their ongoing
efforts to end the death penalty.

-- Robert Greenwald & Heidi Frey



Larry Flynt
FOUNDER & PUBLISHER

Liz Flynt
CHAIRWOMAN

*“We must continue to raise awareness and advocate—
through education, politics and the courts—for the abolition of the
death penalty. We must continue to work for a free, civilized society.
We must continue to support Death Penalty Focus.”*

- Larry Flynt

**FLYNT MANAGEMENT GROUP WOULD LIKE
TO CONGRATULATE THE FOLLOWING HONOREES:**

THE ROSE ELIZABETH BIRD COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE AWARD

**Paula Mitchell, The LA Innocence Project With
Andy Wilson and Maurice Hastings**

THE ABOLITION AWARD

Diann Rust-Tierney

THE JUSTICE IN THE ARTS AWARD

Elizabeth Bruenig, *The Atlantic*

THE MARIO CUOMO ACTS OF COURAGE AWARD

Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro

*Congratulations for 31 faithful years
of Shining a Light*

**in the dark of this Long Night
of the Death Penalty!**

Hope will continue to Rise because of you!



SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH
OF CARONDELET
LOS ANGELES PROVINCE

“... the most deeply human and courageous men and women are those who in life and death dare to submit themselves to the ordeal of walking through the fire of selfhood, of loneliness and tragedy. In their example we can learn... that this life, this world, for all of its cynicism and stupidity and anguish, is also a place where change is possible, where one can take on a host of evils, even death itself. There is no guarantee of victory, but there is a choice: one either collaborates with the enemy... with whatever is miserable or inhumane, or one joins the resistance. To be most deeply human is to be among the resisters, to resist whatever demeans life. And that will lead us to become aware of what one human being owes to another, can mean to another, and to have compassion for all people - all of us - in our terrible fragility.”

Rabbi Leonard Beerman

One of the founders of Death Penalty Focus

With Love from Shelley Fabares and Mike Farrell

Congratulations to

Gov. Josh Shapiro
Paula Mitchell
Andrew Wilson
Maurice Hastings
Diann Rust-Tierney
Elizabeth Bruenig



SANGER DUNKLE LAW, P.C.

Robert Sanger
Stephen Dunkle

Miguel Avila
Sarah Sanger
Hon. Frank Ochoa (Ret.)

The death penalty is more than a bad thing that needs to end. It is evidence of a problem that will continue to threaten our democracy until it is fully addressed.

– Diann Rust-Tierney

Congratulations to all the honorees, and to Mike Farrell and the DPF board and team for their three decades of work to abolish the death penalty.

Nancy Cotton & John Given

Congratulations to the 2023 Honorees

Paula Mitchell

Andrew Wilson

Maurice Hastings

Diann Rust-Tierney

Elizabeth Bruenig

Gov. Josh Shapiro

For the years of courage, hard work and leadership fighting the death penalty.

With Deep Respect

Judy Clarke and Speedy Rice



Clarke Johnston Thorp & Rice *A Partnership of Professional Corporations*

Attorneys at Law – 180 Broadway, Suite 1800, San Diego, California 92101

The Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary
congratulate
DEATH PENALTY FOCUS
and its 2023 Honorees

Paula Mitchell, The LA Innocence Project
with Andy Wilson and Maurice Hastings
Diann Rust-Tierney
Elizabeth Bruenig
for their commitment to promote life and justice



"THAT ALL MAY HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL."

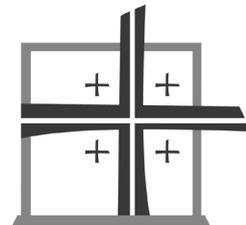
Founder Father Jean Gailhac

African Americans make up 41% of people on death row and 34% of those executed, but only 13% of the population is Black. 75% of executions for murder were in cases with white victims.

(Source: Equal Justice Initiative)

Now, more than ever - Abolition Is Faithful

With gratitude for Death Penalty Focus's 35 years of dedicated opposition to capital punishment, from your friends at All Saints Pasadena



ALL SAINTS CHURCH

All Saints Church, Pasadena

www.allsaints-pas.org

Radical Inclusion + Courageous Justice + Joyful Spirituality + Ethical Stewardship

Thank you Death Penalty Focus
for all of the work you do.
Proud to stand side by side with
you in the fight for abolition.

Reiss Clauson-Wolf & Dana Levy

Now more than ever

Eugenie Ross-Leming
&
Robert Singer

“We have to measure our commitment to the rule of law not by looking at how we treat the rich and the powerful and the talented and the privileged... but by how we treat the poor and the incarcerated and the condemned.”

— Bryan Stevenson



*We salute
Death Penalty Focus
and
congratulate all of
tonight's remarkable and
deserving honorees.*

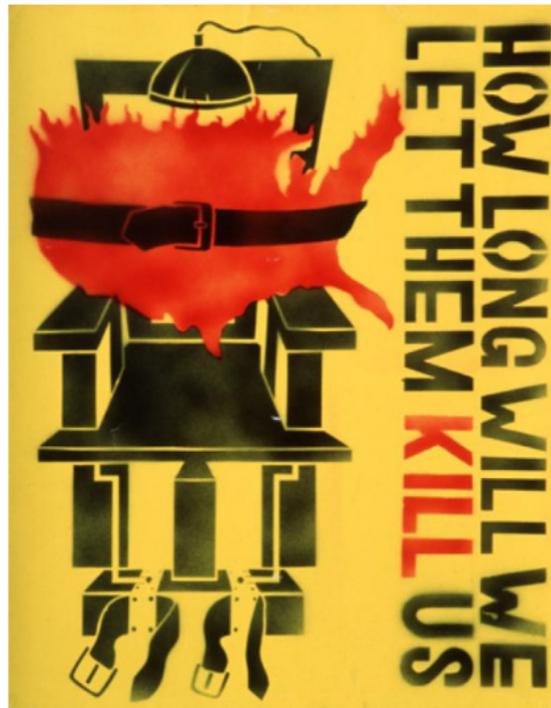
*With gratitude and admiration,
your friends at Public Counsel*

Center for the Study of Political Graphics

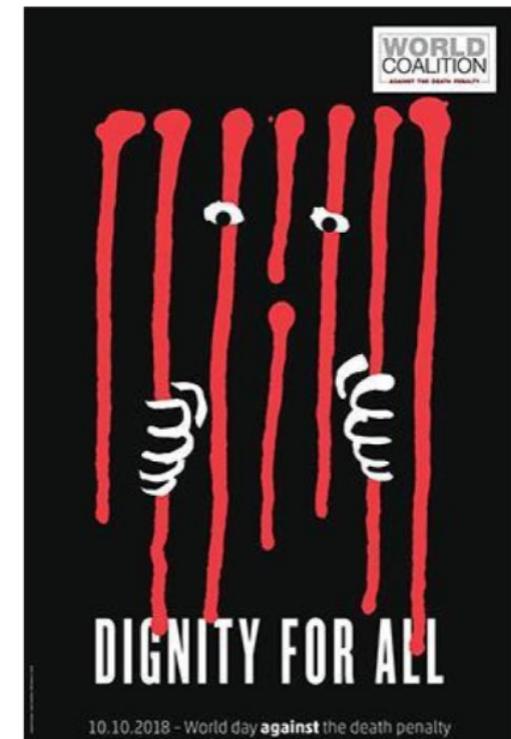
Congratulates

Death Penalty Focus

for your important work



Josh MacPhee, 1997



World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, 2018

CSPG

www.politicalgraphics.org



New Directions Veterans Choir

Take 6

The Manhattan Transfer

Nnenna Freelon

Máiréad Nesbitt

 **TAPP** Network

A Digital Transformation Agency

We are a Proud Partner
of Death Penalty Focus

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To those who fight for justice and truth,
Who tirelessly work to right a wrongful sleuth,
Your dedication and passion inspire,
And give hope to those who have lost the fire.

You shine a light on the darkest of places,
And bring to light unjust sentences and cases,
You are the voice for the voiceless and forgotten,
And your tireless work never leaves you downtrodden.

We thank you for all that you do,
And know that the world is better because of you.



DWORSKY DESIGN

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Thank you to our brother
STEPHEN ROHDE
for the mission of
Death Penalty Focus.

Elaine & Alan Montgomery

**ENDING
THE DEATH
PENALTY.
PROMOTING
RESTORATIVE
JUSTICE.**



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MOBILIZING
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Southern California Partners For Global Justice

is a coalition of religious communities,
organizations, and agencies which
support each other to address
issues of global injustice.

We commit ourselves to the abolition of the Death Penalty in the U.S.

Southern California Partners for Global Justice Coalition Members
+ Daughters of Charity + Daughters of Mary & Joseph + Dominican Sisters,
Mission San Jose + Filipino Migrant Center + Immaculate Heart Community+
+ Long Beach Human Trafficking Task Force + Mary Queen of Heaven
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Good Shepherd + Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus & Mary, U.S.-Ontario
Province + Sisters of the Holy Redeemer + Society of the Holy Child Jesus,
American Province + Verbum Dei High School +

Congratulations to
Death Penalty Focus
for welcoming
Emily Caesar
to the board.

You are so fortunate to have
this amazing woman on your team.
Emily brings heart and sensibility to
everything she undertakes.

Mazel Tov!

Marie Mazzone and David Israeli

Thank you to **Garland Allen**,
our Dad, for the passion,
commitment and
dedication that you have
shown to the mission of DPF.

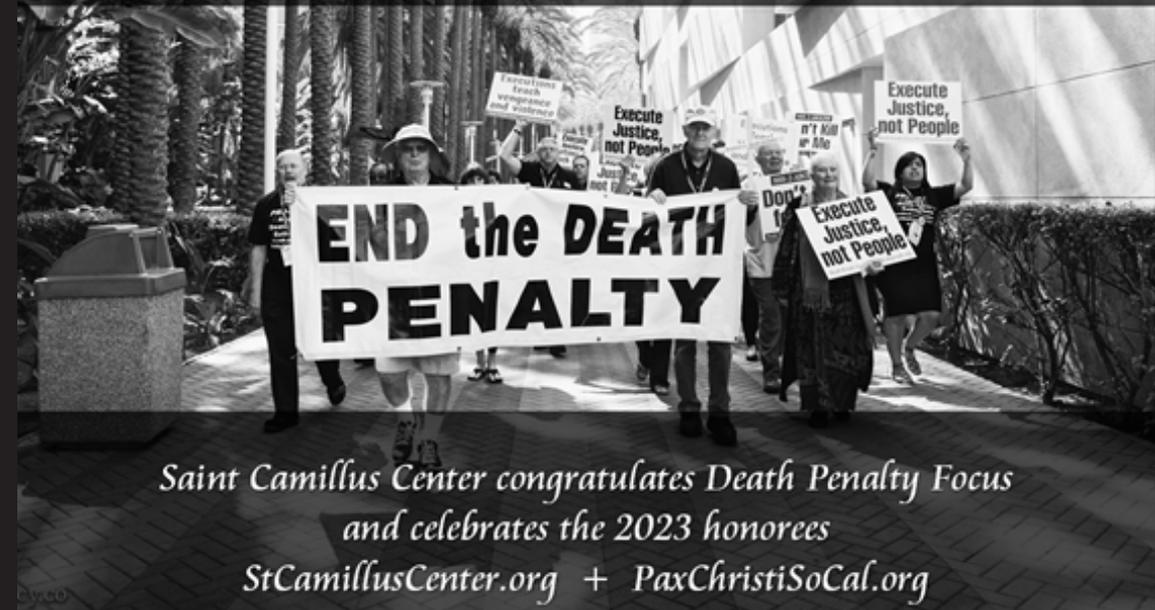
**You inspire us
and we love you.**

Your children and grandchildren

**Darya, Mike, Maddy, Oliver and Henry
Shar, Melissa, Connor, Trevor, Bella and Jordan
Jason, Krista, Leela and Ylo**

"It must be clearly stated that the death penalty is an inhumane measure that, regardless of how it is carried out, abases human dignity. It is per se contrary to the Gospel, because it entails the willful suppression of a human life that never ceases to be sacred in the eyes of its Creator and of which – ultimately – only God is the true judge and guarantor."

Pope Francis, 11 October 2017



*Saint Camillus Center congratulates Death Penalty Focus
and celebrates the 2023 honorees*

StCamillusCenter.org + PaxChristiSoCal.org

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31ST Awards Dinner

Awards Dinner Committee

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Mike Farrell

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Toni Trucks

Death Penalty Focus Mission

Death Penalty Focus is committed to the abolition of the death penalty through public education, grassroots and political organizing, media outreach, and domestic and international coalition building.

Death Penalty Focus

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deathpenalty.org



31ST Awards Dinner