




**INNOCENCE PROJECT**

2018 Annual Report

# A Record-Breaking Year for **Justice**

Affiliated with Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Yeshiva University



The Innocence Project was founded in 1992 by Barry C. Scheck and Peter J. Neufeld at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University to assist incarcerated people who could be proven innocent through DNA testing. To date, more than 360 people in the United States have been exonerated by DNA testing, including 21 who spent time on death row. These people spent an average of 14 years in prison before exoneration and release. The Innocence Project's staff attorneys and Cardozo clinic students provided direct representation or critical assistance in most of these cases. The Innocence Project's groundbreaking use of DNA technology to free innocent people has provided irrefutable proof that wrongful convictions are not isolated or rare events, but instead arise from systemic defects. Now an independent nonprofit organization closely affiliated with Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University, the Innocence Project's mission is to free the staggering number of innocent people who remain incarcerated and to bring substantive reform to the system responsible for their unjust imprisonment.

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# A Record-Breaking Year for **Justice**

For the Innocence Project, 2018 was a record-breaking year for justice. We exonerated nine clients—the most ever in our 26-year history—and we helped pass 17 critical reforms in 14 states. While we view every year as victorious, 2018 was particularly remarkable. Apart from our successes, this year's annual report has an added layer of significance: it is the final one before Maddy deLone ends her 15-year long tenure as executive director of the Innocence Project. At the end of this year, Maddy will be leaving the organization for the next chapter of her professional life and will remain a lifelong supporter, friend and advocate.

Throughout the years that Maddy has been with us, it has been the Innocence Project's strategy to look at the patterns that emerge from our cases, and to use that knowledge to spur reform. In 2018, we saw once again through our policy achievements that this strategy works. With the help of numerous exonerees and Innocence Network organizations, we held the criminal justice system accountable for its wrongdoings through the passage of legislative reforms throughout the country, and we are optimistic that such reforms will help prevent future wrongful convictions.

A concrete example of this strategy is in the case of John Nolley, who was wrongfully convicted in 1998 based on unreliable jailhouse informant testimony and exonerated this past year. Shortly after Tarrant County Chief District Attorney Sharen Wilson recommended vacating Nolley's conviction, she enacted a policy to track and regulate the use of jailhouse informants. The state of Texas has since adopted the most comprehensive jailhouse informant legislation in the country. Similarly, because of Keith Hardin's case—who was wrongfully convicted in 1995 based, in large part, on official misconduct and exonerated this past year—the attorney general has called for a review of other cases handled by the detective involved in Hardin's case (and in at least three other wrongful conviction cases). Since Hardin's exoneration in 2018, this detective has left law enforcement.

Certainly, our cases continue to illustrate the power of DNA as an irrefutable tool of proving innocence. In the case of Eric Kelley—who was wrongfully convicted in 1996 of felony murder and robbery and exonerated in 2018—DNA not only exculpated Kelley and his co-defendant, Ralph Lee, but it also identified the person who actually committed the crime. It is because of DNA that over 360 people across the United States have regained their freedom, reconnected with their families and restored their livelihoods.

If it weren't for the tremendous support of our donors, we could not have exceeded our expectations—we could not have broken records. And, it is because of your continued support that Maddy has been able to grow the organization into what it is today. Although Maddy will no longer be with us in her capacity as executive director, her tenacious spirit will remain; and, together, we will strive to make every year a record-breaking year for justice.

**Jack Taylor**  
Board Chair

**Peter J. Neufeld**  
Co-Founder

**Barry C. Scheck**  
Co-Founder

**Maddy deLone**  
Executive Director

# 2018 Victories:

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**Educating the Public and Creating Awareness Around the Causes and Effects of Wrongful Convictions**

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**2.22 million**

visits to [innocenceproject.org](http://innocenceproject.org)

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**352,900K**

Facebook likes



**1,137**

stories in popular media outlets

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**80**

The Innocence Project Speakers Bureau reached thousands of people across the country through more than **80 engagements**.

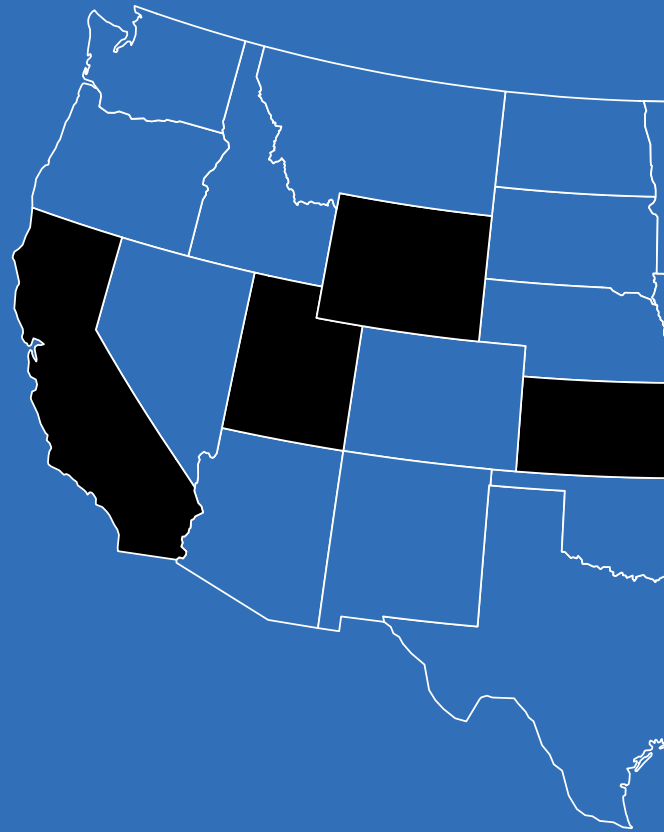
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**Restoring Freedom**

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**2,016**

**new requests** for representation



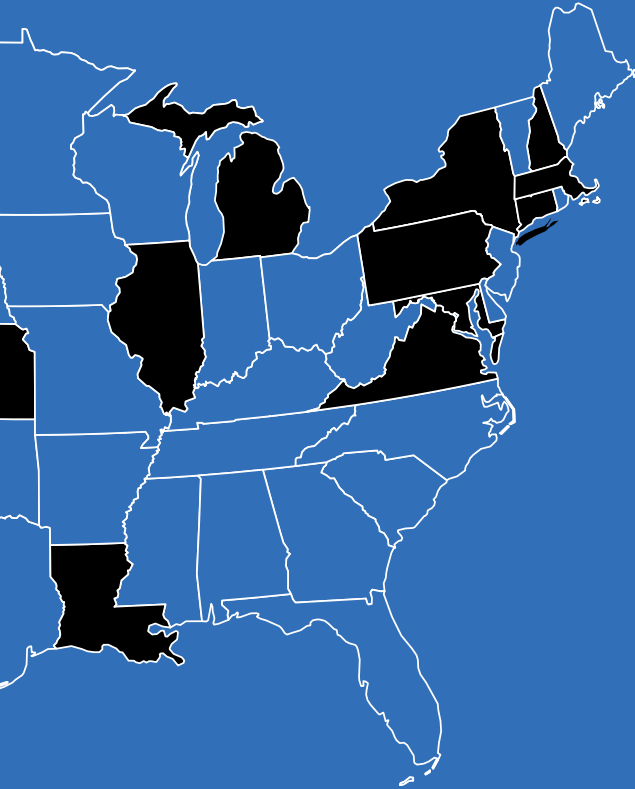
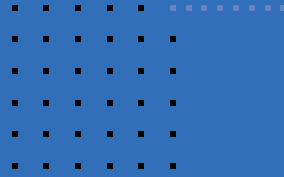
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## Changing the Laws and Practices

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- We ushered in legislative reform in **LA** and **NH**—and supported reform in **CA**—to prevent eyewitness misidentifications.
- We helped pass a law in **IL** that regulates and requires disclosure of jailhouse informant testimony.
- We helped enact laws in **KS** and **MA** to compensate exonerated people.

# A Year in Review



## Educating the Courts

**2,500**

judges, public defenders, forensic practitioners, scientists and academics trained on eyewitness identification, cognitive bias, litigating false confessions and the use of unreliable forensic evidence and testimony in court.



We achieved major court rulings:

**11**

in Eyewitness I.D.

**16**

in Forensics

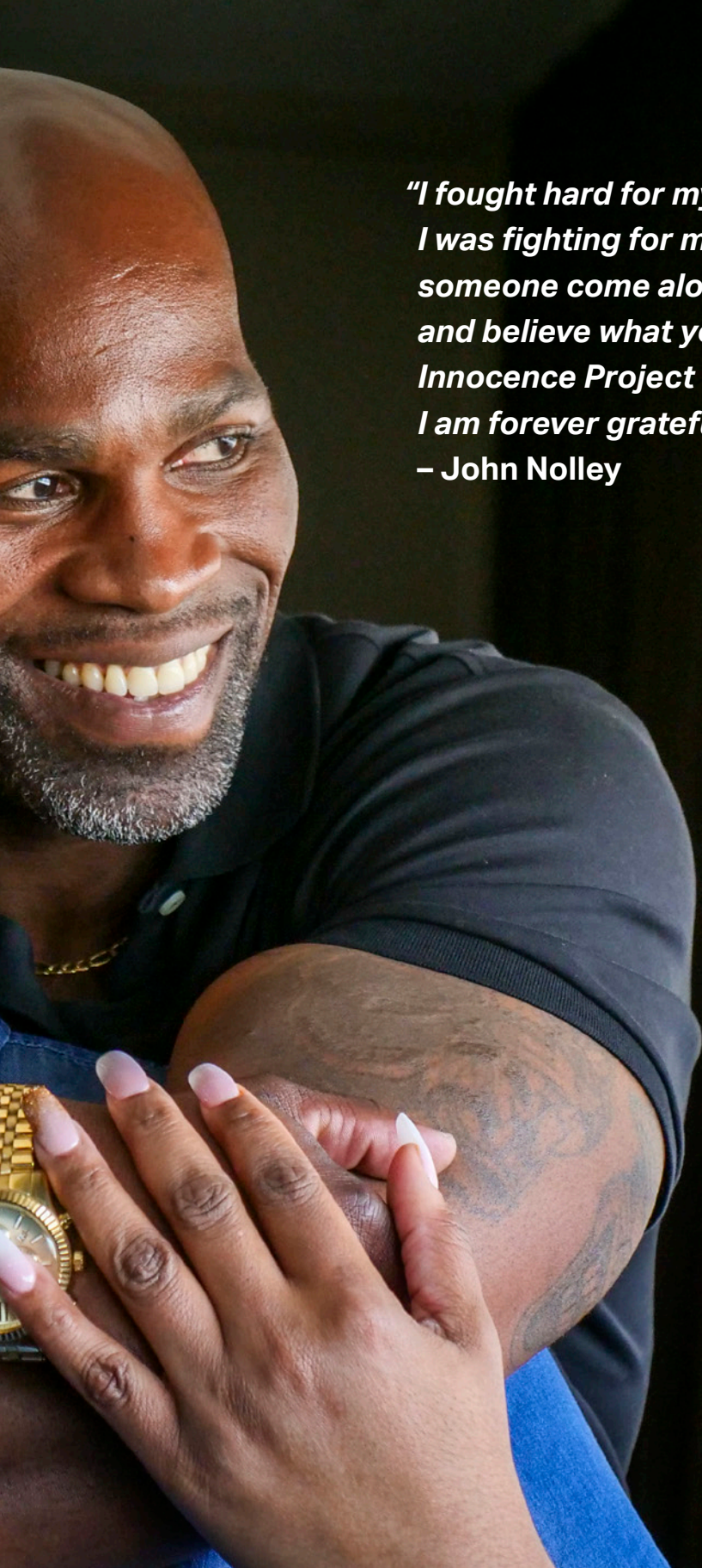
- We helped pass a law in **NY** that creates the country's first independent Commission on Prosecutorial Conduct.
- We worked with legislators in **MD, PA** and **UT** to improve the states' post-conviction DNA testing laws, making testing accessible to more people.
- We worked with legislators in **VA** and **MI** to pass expanded discovery laws.
- We passed change-of-science laws in **WY, MI** and **CT** that will provide innocent people with a vehicle to overturn convictions based on unreliable forensic evidence.
- We helped pass a law in **MA** to establish a statewide Forensic Science Commission, positioned to investigate and redress allegations of forensic negligence and misconduct.



# John Nolley

John Nolley was exonerated in Texas on October 3, 2018, after spending 19 years in prison and two years on bond for a 1996 murder he did not commit. Nolley's wrongful conviction largely rested on the testimony of a jailhouse informant, who claimed that Nolley had confessed to him. During a joint reinvestigation of the case, the Innocence Project and the Tarrant County District Attorney's Conviction Integrity Unit uncovered documents in the state's files revealing that the informant had repeatedly lied on the witness stand when he testified against Nolley.

Nolley's case has already led to significant legal reforms. In 2017, the year after the Tarrant County DA recommended vacating Nolley's conviction, the Texas legislature passed the most comprehensive legislation in the country to track and regulate the use of jailhouse informant testimony.



***“I fought hard for myself because I was fighting for me. To have someone come alongside you and believe what you say, like the Innocence Project did in my case— I am forever grateful.”***

**– John Nolley**

John Nolley and his wife, Kimya, at the 2019 Innocence Network Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Today, Nolley lives in Texas with Kimya and their two-year-old son, John Nolley III. Nolley has also reunited with his three adult children and started his own lawn service business.

PHOTO: LACY ATKINS

***“The best part about being free is getting to be around my friends and family. It is also getting to come and go as I please.”***  
**– Keith Hardin**







# Garr Keith Hardin

Garr Keith Hardin spent more than 20 years in prison for a 1992 murder he did not commit. The Innocence Project uncovered evidence of police misconduct and exculpatory DNA, which proved his innocence and ultimately led to his exoneration in February 2018.

Since Hardin's exoneration, the Kentucky Attorney General has called for a review of other cases handled by the detective who was involved in Hardin's case—a necessary first step in taking accountability for the injustice Hardin endured.

Hardin at the 2018 Innocence Network Conference in Memphis, Tennessee. While in prison, Hardin practiced yoga as a means of maintaining hope and escaping the emotional turmoil of wrongful conviction. Today, Hardin is living in Kentucky where he is working and spending time with his loved ones.

PHOTO: LACY ATKINS

***"Breathing that first  
breath of fresh air  
was amazing. The  
trees...the scenery..."***

Kelley shared  
moments after he  
walked free.

Eric Kelley at the Innocence  
Project office in April 2018.  
Kelley currently lives in New  
Jersey in housing secured by  
the Innocence Project social  
work team.

PHOTO: LACY ATKINS





## Eric Kelley

In 2018, Eric Kelley was exonerated of a 1996 felony murder and robbery conviction in New Jersey based on exculpatory DNA test results.

At the Innocence Project's request, the court ordered re-testing of a hat recovered at the scene that the assailant had worn and which was found next to the victim's body. The testing excluded both Kelley and his co-defendant, Ralph Lee, who had falsely confessed during custodial interrogation. The DNA results implicated another man who had been incarcerated for committing a similar crime.

Because of this irrefutable proof of his innocence, Kelley was exonerated on April 6, 2018, marking the end of his more than 24-year fight for justice.

# Breaking Records Together

The Innocence Project's record-breaking year for justice in 2018—and tremendous successes in the years prior—would not have been possible without the generous support we receive from our donors. We are endlessly thankful for their commitment to our work. Together, we will endeavor to continue breaking records in the years ahead.



Top: Exoneree Michelle Murphy (L) and Innocence Ambassador Aisha Hinds (R).

PHOTO: MATTEDESIGN

Bottom: Senior Innocence Project Attorney Seema Saifee (L) and Exoneree Gregory Counts (R). PHOTO: MATTEDESIGN



(L-R): Peter Neufeld, Maddy deLone and Barry Scheck.

PHOTO: MATTEDESIGN



Top: Exonerees Malcolm Alexander (L) and Kevin Bailey (R) at the 2018 Innocence Gala. PHOTO: MATTEDESIGN

Bottom: Innocence Ambassador Esperanza Spalding at the 2018 Innocence Network Conference in Memphis, TN. PHOTO: LACY ATKINS



From top: The March for Justice at the 2018 Innocence Network Conference. PHOTO: LACY ATKINS

Exoneree Rodney Roberts during the March for Justice. PHOTO: LACY ATKINS

Client Felipe Rodriguez (L) greeting exoneree Dewey Bozella (R) at the 2018 Innocence Gala. PHOTO: MATTEDESIGN

Events and Special Projects Manager Shoshanah Kennedy Hobson (L) and Social Worker Suzy Salamy (R). PHOTO: MATTEDESIGN

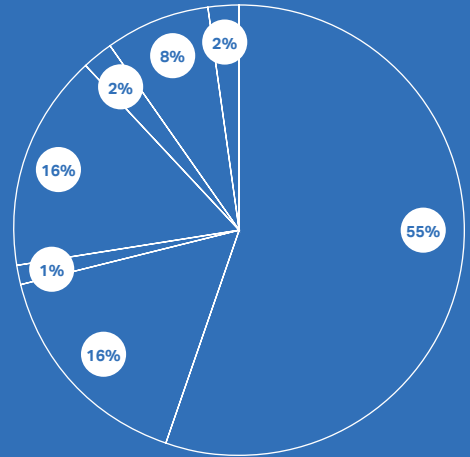
# Fiscal Year 2018

## Financial Information

JULY 1, 2017 – JUNE 30, 2018

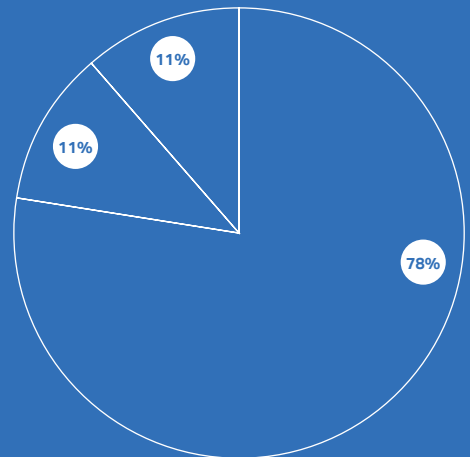
### OPERATING REVENUE

55%	INDIVIDUALS	\$	7,847,814
16%	FOUNDATIONS	\$	2,242,475
1%	CORPORATIONS	\$	173,832
16%	FUNDRAISING EVENTS (NET)	\$	2,203,243
2%	YESHIVA UNIVERSITY	\$	310,000
8%	INVESTMENTS	\$	1,090,657
2%	OTHER INCOME	\$	276,264
		\$	<b>14,144,285</b>

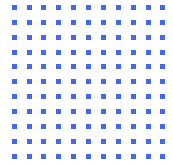


### EXPENDITURES

78%	PROGRAMS	\$	10,553,177
11%	MANAGEMENT	\$	1,533,044
11%	FUNDRAISING	\$	1,522,628
		\$	<b>13,608,849</b>



# Fiscal Year 2018 Donors



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Laura and John Arnold  
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## \$500,000+

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## \$250,000+

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University

## \$100,000+

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The Innocence Project thanks our generous supporters and regrets that we do not have space to list them all.

\* Denotes that donor is deceased

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“Once I became aware of the tragic impact of mass incarceration and wrongful conviction, I was deeply moved. For generations, so many individuals, as well as their families, have been destroyed. I vowed to get involved in organizations that would fight for the rights of those who have been imprisoned. One such organization that has had a dramatic impact on criminal justice reform is the Innocence Project. Members of this non-profit organization tirelessly fight the battles to clear innocent people and to litigate against unjust practices in the penal system. Through my donations to the Innocence Project, I am doing what I can to support those who relentlessly fight for justice.”

—Catherine Heron

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### **\$1,000 to \$2,499**

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wrongly convicted  
people were freed  
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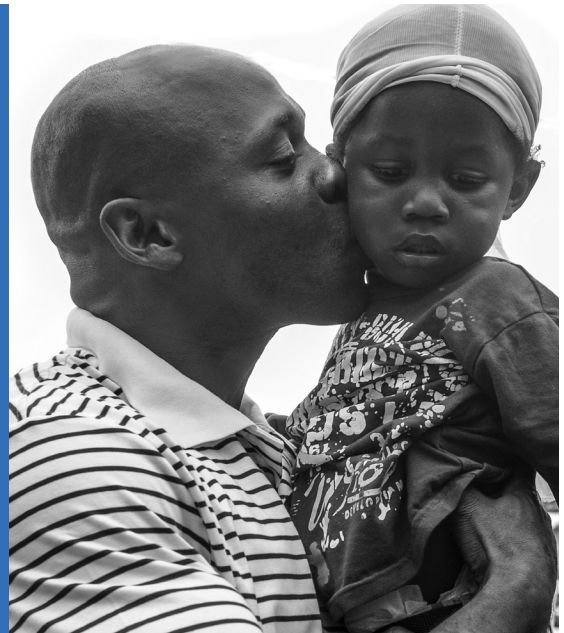
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at [lsampson@innocenceproject.org](mailto:lsampson@innocenceproject.org)  
to discuss how you can include the  
Innocence Project in your estate plans.

**Nate Brown**, pictured with his grandson, on the day  
he was exonerated in June 2014 in New Orleans.  
Photo: *The New Orleans Advocate*.





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**Diana Diaz**  
Policy Department Assistant

**Jessica Diaz**  
Intake Assistant

**Christopher Dietz**  
Paralegal

**Julia DiLaura**  
Assistant Director of Institutional Giving and Special Initiatives

**Elisa Espiritu**  
Organizational Development Specialist, Innocence Network Support Unit

**M. Chris Fabricant**  
Director of Strategic Litigation (Joseph Flom Special Counsel)

**Michelle Feldman**  
State Campaigns Director

**Susan Friedman**  
Staff Attorney

**Prahelika Gadtaula**  
Research Associate

**Maxson Gallo**  
Paralegal

**Dara Gell**  
Investigations Attorney

**Sajja Hanif**  
Network Coordinator, Innocence Network Support Unit

**Elizabeth Hintze**  
Assistant Director of Data Systems and Analytics

**Robyn Trent Jefferson**  
Administrative Associate, Legal

**Jeffrey Johnson**  
Office Manager

**Rachel Jones**  
Paralegal, Strategic Litigation

**Masha Katz Baer**  
Assistant Director of Individual Giving

**Meredith Kennedy**  
Director, Innocence Network Support Unit

**Shoshanah Kennedy Hobson**  
Events and Special Projects Manager

**Sara LaCava Lieberman**  
Assistant Director of Development, Innocence Network Support Unit

**Erika Lago**  
Human Resources Coordinator

**Audrey Levitin**  
Director of Development and External Affairs

**Gabriel Lopez**  
Case Analyst

**Marissa Lowe**  
Case Analyst

**Julia Lucivero**  
Media Relations & Digital Advocacy Manager

**Laura Ma**  
Assistant Director, Digital and Direct Mail Fundraising

**Juan Martinez**  
Chief Communications Officer

**Alicia Maule**  
Digital Engagement Director

**John McKeown**  
Director of Information Technology

**Vanessa Meterko**  
Research Analyst

**Patrick Morris**  
Finance Associate

**Nina Morrison**  
Senior Litigation Counsel

**Peter Neufeld**  
Co-Founder and Special Counsel

**Indrani Nicodemus**  
Manager of Special Events

**Corinne Padavano**  
Director of Human Resources

**Vanessa Potkin**  
Director of Post-Conviction Litigation

**Elizabeth Powers**  
State Policy Advocate

**Jane Pucher**  
Staff Attorney

**Nigel Quiroz**  
Policy Analyst

**Tashawn Reagon**  
Paralegal, Strategic Litigation

**Leslie Rider**  
Executive Manager

**Linda Riefberg**  
In House Counsel

**Laurie Roberts**  
State Policy Advocate

**Marguerite Sacerdote**  
Policy Associate

**Seema Saiffee**  
Senior Staff Attorney

**Suzanne Salamy**  
Social Worker

**Carlita Salazar**  
Deputy Chief Communications Officer

**Jasmine Salters**  
Content Strategist, Mellon/ ACLS Public Fellow

**Lauren Sampson**  
Deputy Director of Development

**Barry Scheck**  
Co-Founder and Special Counsel

**Meryl Schwartz**  
Deputy Executive Director

**Kimbree Silas**  
Administrative Assistant, Development

**Chloe Smith**  
Paralegal

**Adnan Sultan**  
Staff Attorney

**Soreti Teshome**  
Paralegal

**Joseph Thompson**  
Chief Financial Officer

**Elizabeth Vaca**  
Executive Assistant to the Co-Founders

**Isabel Vasquez**  
Communications Assistant

**Marc Vega**  
Case Analyst

**Alexis Viera**  
Paralegal

**Karen Wolff**  
Social Worker

**Emma Zack**  
Publications Manager

*“Freedom means to breathe...to feel. It means not answering to anyone and doing what you want as you feel it is best for you—without anyone taking that away from you.”*

– Clemente Aguirre-Jarquin

## INNOCENCE PROJECT

### Innocence Project, Inc.

40 Worth Street, Suite 701

New York, NY 10013

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More than 360 people in the United States have been exonerated through DNA testing. The Innocence Project was involved in more than 200 of those DNA exonerations. Others were helped by Innocence Network organizations, private attorneys and by pro se defendants in a few instances.

Cover: **Clemente Aguirre-Jarquin** was exonerated in 2018 after more than 14 years in prison for two murders he did not commit, making him the 21st person exonerated by DNA testing after being sentenced to death. PHOTO: LACY ATKINS

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