

MONTANA INNOCENCE PROJECT ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Freeing the
innocent
and preventing
wrongful
convictions



Legal Representation



Dave Wilkes
Served 9 years

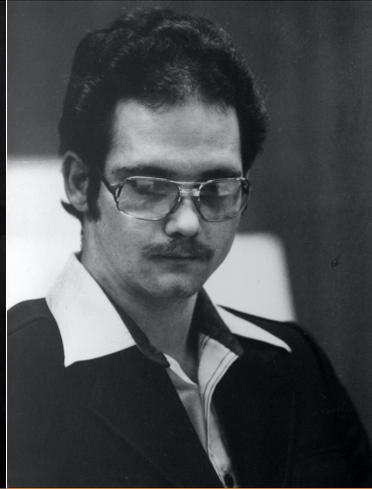
On Jan 29, 2020,
Dave became MTIP's
7th freed client.

Dave now resides in
Missouri and is
planning to open a
tattoo shop.



Aaron Oliphant
Served 3 years
& counting

We provided the court
evidence that medical
malpractice and
ineffective counsel
resulted in Aaron's
conviction of assault
on a minor.



Bernard Pease
Served 37 years
& counting

We made progress on
DNA testing and are
awaiting results that
we believe will
exonerate Bernard of
a 1984 murder.



Katie Garding
Served 10 years in
prison & is currently at
pre-release

We took Katie's case
to the highest court in
the land and helped
her secure pre-release
from the Montana
Women's Prison.

By the Numbers

1

Freed person

43

Applications for
legal assistance

6

Open cases

26

Investigations

1200
+

Volunteer and pro
bono hours

8

Clinic students

5

Virtual education
panels/seminars

INCOME

INDIVIDUAL GIFTS:
\$58,139

CORPORATE GIFTS:
\$2,415

FOUNDATION GIFTS:
\$137,099

GOVERNMENT GRANTS:
\$37,809

IN-KIND GIFTS: \$54,000

EDUCATION

- Supervised clinic students who participated in weekly roundtable discussions about cases and presented oral arguments to panelists on Zoom
- Hosted a virtual fireside chat where we discussed coerced confessions and the wrongful conviction cases of Barry Beach and the Central Park Five
- Created a two-week online campaign called barriers2innocence that explored barriers between Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and justice including topics like bias-motivated policing and the presumption of guilt

ADVOCACY

- Led efforts on a study bill examining exoneree compensation, resulting in a bipartisan, committee sponsored 2021 Session bill
- Provided action alerts to supporters of the exoneree compensation bill as it progressed through the legislature
- Participated in the Montana Coalition for Public Safety and Montana Death Penalty Abolition Coalition
- Co-hosted a Walkout for Justice with the re-entry organization Welcome Back
- Hosted a virtual letter-writing party prior to Katie's parole hearing
- Obtained more than 1,500 signatures on a petition supporting Katie's release from prison



STRATEGIC PLANNING

In 2020, MTIP engaged the services of the Innocence Project Network Support Unit and convened a Strategic Planning Committee to guide the organization through a comprehensive strategic planning process. Over the course of several months, the Committee identified a diverse group of stakeholders in the criminal legal system, including clients, client family members, lawmakers, law enforcement, prosecution and defense counsel, members of the judiciary, representatives of peer organizations, and MTIP donors and other funders. This outreach resulted in nearly 40 stakeholder surveys and more than 30 interviews to help inform the next chapter of MTIP's work.

In December, MTIP board and staff engaged in a day-long strategic visioning and planning retreat to create and prioritize a list of strategic organizational goals for the next three years and draft a work plan to see them through.

The process brought the following overarching mission intentions to the fore:

- Racial Justice—address the disparate impact of the criminal legal system on BIPOC communities and systemic flaws
- Equal Justice—focus on legal/civil rights, accuracy, accountability
- Community & Human-Centered Impacts—dignity and respect for all

We look forward to sharing the final plan with you in 2021!

Contact

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Montana Innocence Project is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
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