



Seizing the Momentum

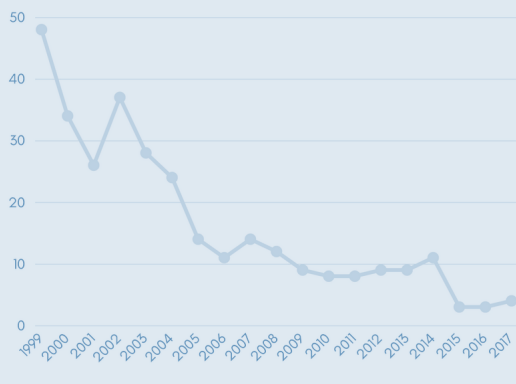
Winter 2018

Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

Use of the death penalty continues to decline in Texas

Executions and death sentences remained near-historic lows in 2017, according to a new report from the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (TCADP). Texas executed seven people in 2017, matching 2016 for the lowest number of executions in two decades, and jurors voted for death in only four cases. For the first time since 1985, Harris County was not responsible for any executions.

New Death Sentences in Texas 1999-2017



Texas continues to move away from the death penalty, even in the counties that have used it the most. Prosecutors, juries, judges, and the public are subjecting our state's death penalty practices to unprecedented scrutiny. In an increasing number of cases, they are accepting alternatives to this flawed and irreversible punishment.

Texas was one of just eight states nationwide to carry out executions in 2017 and accounted for 30% of all U.S. executions.

Over the last three years, Texas juries have rejected the death penalty in nearly as many cases as they have imposed it. For the third year in a row, there were no new death sentences in Harris or Dallas Counties; together, those two counties have sent more than 400 people to death row since 1974 and account for 183 executions. Three other cases in which prosecutors sought the death penalty resulted in sentences of life without the possibility of parole. For the second consecutive year, no

one was resentenced to death in Texas.

Imposition remains arbitrary and unfair

As use of the death penalty declines, its application remains geographically isolated and racially biased. Just six counties account for more than half of new death sentences in Texas since 2013. Over the last five years, 70% of death sentences have been imposed on people of color.

Decisions at the U.S. Supreme Court significantly impacted several Texas death penalty cases in 2017. In March, the Court ruled in *Moore v. Texas* that the state of Texas must use current medical standards for determining whether a person is intellectually disabled and therefore exempt from execution. Moore's claim received support from a broad coalition, including prominent Texans from across the political spectrum, faith leaders, intellectual disability organizations, medical organizations, and leaders of the legal profession.

Scheduled Executions 2018

January

18- Anthony Shore

30- William Rayford

February

1- John Battaglia

22- Thomas Whitaker

March

27- Rosendo Rodriguez

Continued on page 2

Also in this issue:

TCADP 2018 Annual Conference: Keynote speaker, panelists, and award winners

Amplify Austin Information

North Texas Roundup

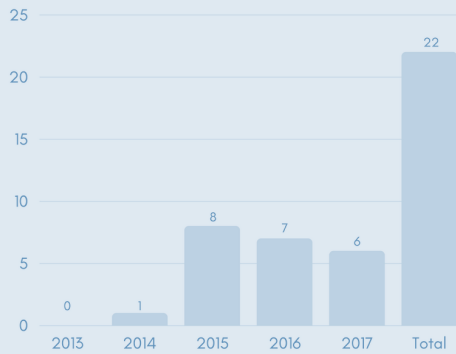
Thank you, donors!



Continued: Use of the death penalty declines in Texas

The Supreme Court also ruled in the case of Duane Buck, who was condemned to death in 1997 in Harris County after an expert witness for the defense testified that Buck was more likely to be dangerous in the future because he is black. The Justices sided with Buck on February 22, 2017; his case was returned to Harris County after the federal courts granted relief. In October, he was sentenced to life after prosecutors and defense attorneys reached an agreement.

Stays of Execution granted by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals



Courts scrutinizing more cases

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals (CCA) stayed six executions and remanded several other cases for consideration of claims related to intellectual disability and ineffective assistance of counsel, among other issues. Over the last three years, the CCA has granted 21 stays of execution. In contrast, from 2012 through 2014, the Court granted a total of three stays.

Four individuals received reduced sentences and were removed from death row in 2017; collectively, they spent more than 100 years on death row. Two other individuals died in custody, including Raymond Martinez, who was one of the state's longest-serving death row prisoners.

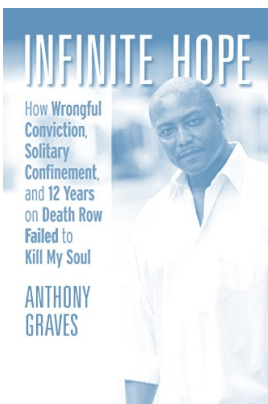
Since 2013, a total of 27 individuals have been removed from death row in Texas for reasons other than execution: reduced sentences (19); deaths in custody (7); or exonerations (1). More than half of these cases came from Harris County. During this same time, the State executed 53 people.

The death penalty landscape in Texas continues to change as both death sentences and executions decline. In light of these developments, TCADP urges concerned citizens and elected officials to confront the realities of this irreversible punishment and reconsider the efficacy and cost of the death penalty as a means of achieving justice.

Texas Death Penalty Developments in 2017: The Year in Review is available online at <http://tcadp.org/get-informed/reports/>. Contact report author Kristin Houle at khoule@tcadp.org to receive a hard copy or a copy directly by email.

Maps illustrating death sentences by county are available at <http://tcadp.org/get-informed/death-sentences-by-county/1974-2016-county-map/>.

Members of the TCADP Lobby Corps will deliver copies of the report to every legislative office at the State Capitol on January 23-24, 2018. We also intend to deliver copies to key District Attorney Offices in Texas. Contact Kristin at khoule@tcadp.org to learn more about these efforts.



Infinite Hope by Anthony Graves

Infinite Hope is an argument against the death penalty through one man's personal story. It is about a man enduring a life on death row year after year, when he knows that he is one hundred percent innocent and that his exoneration is unlikely. This book exposes an extreme version of when the judicial system is wrong and, as Graves describes it, "what people go through when they're treated as disposable."

Infinite Hope is available on amazon.com.

Contact us if you are interested in organizing a book-signing event in your area.



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Seizing the Momentum

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TCADP would like to give a special thanks to Mae Whitman for volunteering in the TCADP office!



Amplify Austin: Help TCADP six-peat!

Amplify Austin, a 24-hour online fundraising festival, will take place from 6 PM on March 1st to 6 PM on March 2nd. You can help us win a \$1,000 bonus prize for the sixth year in a row by donating between 1:00 and 2:00 PM Central Time on Friday, March 2.

Consider donating at:

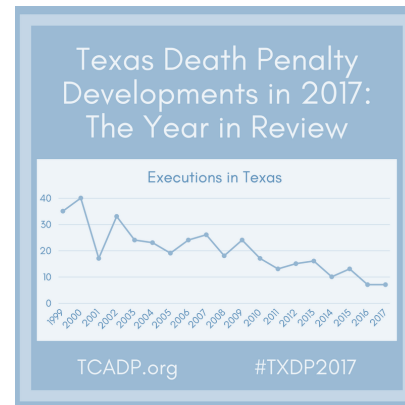
1:13 PM for the 13 people exonerated from Texas death row

1:20 PM for the 20 jurisdictions (19 states and the District of Columbia) that don't allow the death penalty

1:40 PM for the 140 countries that have abolished the death penalty in law or practice



For more information, visit
<http://amplifyatx.iliveheregivehere.org/TCADP>



Want to see more coverage and images from our annual report? Visit Twitter and search using #TXDP2017



Connect with TCADP on Facebook!

View photos from our events, connect with more than 4,900 other supporters, and learn about important death penalty developments. "Like" us today!



TCADP 2018 Annual Conference: Transforming the Landscape

The TCADP 2018 Annual Conference – “Transforming the Landscape” – will take place on Saturday, February 17, 2018 at Friendship-West Baptist Church in Dallas. Now in its 20th consecutive year, the TCADP Annual Conference is a must-attend event for everyone in the abolition movement in Texas. The conference features inspiring speakers, informative workshops, and great networking opportunities. Take advantage of pre-registration rates until February 8, 2018. Sponsorship opportunities are also available.



If you can't join us for the full day, consider purchasing a ticket for our awards luncheon and keynote address by **Reverend Sharon Risher**. Rev. Risher was a staff chaplain and trauma specialist with Parkland Hospital in Dallas from 2012-2016. Her mother, two cousins and childhood friend—Ethel Lance, Susie Jackson, Tywanza Sanders and Myra Thompson, respectively—were killed along with five others at Emanuel AME Church (“Mother Emanuel”) in Charleston, South Carolina in 2015. As our keynote speaker, she will address her experiences with the criminal justice system in the wake of these horrific murders and her longstanding opposition to the death penalty.

2018 Annual Award Recipients

The TCADP Board of Directors is delighted to announce the recipients of our 2018 Annual Awards, which will be presented during the luncheon at our 2018 Annual Conference.

Appreciation Awards

TCADP's Appreciation Awards are bestowed upon individuals and organizations who have made significant – often selfless – contributions towards our efforts to end the death penalty in Texas. We are pleased to present our 2018 Appreciation Awards to the following individuals and organizations:



Reverend Deanna Golsan is the Senior Pastor at Disciples Christian Church in Plano, Texas. She became involved in the death penalty issue after learning that a member of her congregation was the mother of a son on death row. Rev. Golsan served as pastor to the family and as spiritual advisor to the man in the months leading up to his execution, and she witnessed his execution on their behalf. Through that firsthand experience, her position on the issue evolved and she became an outspoken opponent of the death penalty.

Over the last year and a half, she has participated as a speaker in numerous events organized by TCADP, including faith leader luncheons and panel discussions with Shane Claiborne, which took place in Dallas and Fort Worth in the fall of 2016. Rev. Golsan also participated in TCADP's 2017 Faith Leader Advocacy Day on the Death Penalty and testified in support of death penalty abolition in front of the Texas House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee on April 20, 2017. She continues to seek opportunities to share her story and engage other faith leaders on this issue.



Dallas County exonerees Christopher Scott, Johnnie Lindsey, and Steven Phillips founded **House of Renewed Hope** in 2010 “to fight for social justice for the wrongfully accused and convicted.” Together, they work to raise awareness of wrongful convictions, implement reforms, and advocate on behalf of those who are still incarcerated due to flaws in the criminal justice system. They also investigate individual cases and devoted considerable time and effort to the case of Max Soffar, who spent three decades on death row before his death from cancer in 2016. Serious questions continue to surround the integrity and reliability of Soffar's capital murder conviction. House of Renewed Hope's work on Soffar's case is featured in the documentary film, “True Conviction,” which premiered at the 2017 Tribeca Film Festival and is now screening throughout the country.

Since House of Renewed Hope's inception, the non-profit organization has received nearly 300 claims of innocence. Christopher Scott and Johnnie Lindsey will serve as panelists on the morning of the conference.



Jeff Newberry is a legal clinic supervisor at the University of Houston Law Center, where he works with Professor David R. Dow supervising the law students and interns working in the school's death penalty clinic. Jeff has worked exclusively on capital appeals since graduating from the UH Law Center in 2010. During that time, he has been a part of teams representing eighteen men whose executions were imminent.

Jeff worked tirelessly for many years to pursue justice for Robert Pruett. Sadly, Robert was executed by the State of Texas on October 12, 2017, despite significant evidence of his innocence. We are grateful for Jeff's advocacy on Robert's behalf as well as for the compassion and kindness he displayed towards Robert's friends and family over the course of his legal ordeal, including five execution dates.

Courage Award

TCADP's Courage Award recognizes those who have encountered the death penalty firsthand and bravely shared their experiences with decision makers and with the public at large.



We are humbled to present the 2018 Courage Award to **Glenn and Judy Cherry** for their unwavering opposition to the death penalty for the man who killed their son, Jonas Cherry, and their public, selfless efforts to stop Paul David Storey's execution in April 2017. They not only provided an affidavit to attorneys and met with decision makers but also recorded a powerful video appeal. Their advocacy raised questions as to whether prosecutors withheld information about their opposition to the death penalty from Storey's defense attorneys during his trial and led to a stay of execution from the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals. The Cherrys' appeal for mercy inspired thousands of people in Texas

and around the country.

David P. Atwood Founder's Award

The David P. Atwood Founder's Award was established by the TCADP Board of Directors in 2011 in honor of Houstonian Dave Atwood, who founded our organization more than 20 years ago. The award is given at the discretion of the TCADP Board and honors those who have made a lifelong commitment to justice.



The TCADP Board of Directors is pleased to present the 2018 Founder's Award to **Reverend Doctor Wes Magruder**. Rev. Dr. Magruder is the Senior Pastor at Kessler Park United Methodist Church in Dallas, Texas. He has been an active member of TCADP since 2011, when he drove all the way from Plano to San Antonio to attend our "Religious Leaders Dialogue on the Death Penalty." The following year, he participated in our Dallas initiative, "A Faithful Conversation on the Death Penalty," representing the United Methodist Church's position against the death penalty.

Since then, he has worked to organize TCADP members in Collin County, staffed TCADP information tables at conferences and community events, and participated in a Faithful Pilgrimage from Dallas to Fort Worth in February 2014, walking 35 miles in one day to draw attention to the death penalty and promote TCADP's 2014 Annual Conference.

In June 2014, Rev. Dr. Magruder presented a resolution calling on all local churches and lay members of the North Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church to pressure their local and state representatives to work toward the abolition of the death penalty in Texas and for all clergy to sign the Interfaith Statement of Opposition to the Death Penalty. Delegates overwhelmingly passed the resolution as one of the final acts at the conference that year.

Want to congratulate our award winners? Purchase an advertisement for our conference program or sponsor a table at the Awards Luncheon/. For more information, please visit <http://tcadp.org/what-we-do/annual-conference/>. Sponsors to date: Serena Connelly, Miley & Brown, P.C., and Lon Burnam



Thank You for Your Generous Support

TCADP thanks the following organizations and individuals who contributed between October 28, 2017 and January 8, 2018. Your financial support is critical to the activities and events described in this newsletter. Please let us know if we inadvertently left you or anyone in your household off this list. We apologize in advance if we missed anyone.

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Sophie Caton*	Mary Ann Huston	Judy Rodriguez	Houston
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DJ Compton*	Ray Jacobson	David Romer	Social Action-Central
Jim and Sherry Coombes	Elizabeth Jeter	Scott Ruthart	Texas Chapter
Pat Cramer	Carole Johnson*	Veronique Schlumberger	St. John's United Methodist
Mariarosaria Crispino*	Pastor Charles F. Johnson	Catherine E. Schneider	Church (Austin)
Gail Cronauer	Jessie Johnson	Robert Schuwert	
Dr. Keeley Crowfoot*	Kathryn M. Kase	Marian Schwartz	*Partners for Justice or
Heather Cunnup*	Paula Keeth*	Nancy Scofield	Sustaining Members
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Alison Dieter*	Margie and Larry Kremer	Aftab Siddiqui*	program)
Arthur L. Dietz*	Judith Lackritz	Annette Spanhel*	
Chris Dowling	Hollis Lewis	Hugh Stearns	
Kay Duffy-Taylor*	Barb Lorraine	Dr. Scott and Rebecca	
Jimmy Dunne	Theresa and Dan Luby	Steiner	
Thomas Dum*	Fr. John Manahan*	Skyler Stevens*	



Greetings from North Texas!

While I've only been on the job as TCADP's North Texas Outreach Coordinator for a few months, I've been energized by the change I'm seeing take place in Dallas and Tarrant Counties. 2017 was a year of steady progress toward ending the death penalty across our state, and the North Texas landscape was no exception. Last year, although prosecutors in Dallas County sought the death penalty in two cases, no new death penalty sentences were handed down, continuing a trend of Dallas juries rejecting the death sentence that has lasted since 2013! And in Tarrant County, a Fort Worth jury rejected the death penalty this past October.

It's clear that North Texas juries are increasingly unwilling to impose the death penalty when other alternatives are available, but we still have work to do convincing prosecutors not to waste money and resources seeking the death penalty in the first place. Since 2018 is an election year, TCADP and its members have one of our best opportunities to communicate this message directly to district attorneys and other stakeholders. Both the Dallas and Tarrant County D.A.s are up for reelection, so stay tuned to TCADP.org and your email inbox for actions, forums, town halls, and other opportunities to connect directly with the candidates before the March primaries.

Other upcoming activities in North Texas include marching in the Dallas Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Parade, a workshop with Rev. Deanna Golsan at Brite Divinity School's Minister's Week in Fort Worth, execution vigils in Dallas and Tarrant counties, precinct and senate district conventions, and quarterly membership meetings. And, of course, Dallas is proud to host TCADP's 2018 Annual Conference at Friendship-West Baptist Church in February! Register today for an unmissable chance to strategize, learn, and network with other North Texas supporters!

Register Today!

TCADP 2018 Annual Conference
February 17, 2018 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Friendship-West Baptist Church
Dallas, Texas

_____ \$60 TCADP Member

_____ \$80 Non-Member

_____ \$30 Student

_____ \$40 Luncheon ticket only

_____ Enclosed is an additional contribution toward the conference.

Lunch preference:
Vegan
Vegetarian
No restrictions

Name(s): _____

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Registration includes breakfast and lunch.

Questions? Contact the TCADP office at 512-441-1808.

Rates will increase after February 8, 2018.

Please make checks payable to TCADP or go online to www.tcadp.org to register.

Mail payment and registration form to:
TCADP; 2709 S. Lamar; Austin, TX 78704.

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Is your membership current? Call the TCADP office at (512) 441-1808 to see if it's time to renew. Thank you!

TCADP 2018 Annual Conference Transforming the Landscape

Saturday, February 17, 2018, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Friendship-West Baptist Church
2020 West Wheatland Road, Dallas, Texas

Registration Options:

- By mail (see form on page 7)
- Online at www.tcadp.org
- By phone (call the TCADP office at 512.441.1808)

- **General Membership Meeting**
- **Panel Discussion**
- **Keynote Speaker**
- **Annual Awards Luncheon**
- **Workshops**
- **Exhibitors**

Pre-Registration by February 8, 2018:
TCADP Member \$60 / Non-Member \$80
Student \$30

After February 8, 2018:
TCADP Member \$75 / Non-Member \$95
Student \$35

Registration fee includes breakfast and lunch.

Luncheon Ticket Only — Keynote and Awards
12:30 to 2:30 PM (Must purchase by February 8th) \$40

More information:
<http://tcadp.org/what-we-do/annual-conference/>