



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Author and activist Sister Helen Prejean to address TCADP Annual Conference

Virtual event will honor five individuals & feature representatives of states that have abolished the death penalty in last three years

(Austin, Texas) — Advocates from across Texas will gather online this Saturday, February 26, 2022 for the 24th annual conference of the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (TCADP).

Sister Helen Prejean, who is known around the world for her tireless work against the death penalty, will deliver the keynote address for the *TCADP 2022 Annual Conference: Transforming Justice in Texas*. Her 1993 book, *Dead Man Walking*, ignited a national debate on capital punishment and spawned an Academy Award-winning movie, a play, and an opera.

During the morning panel discussion, representatives from Colorado, New Hampshire, and Virginia will discuss their states' successful campaigns to abolish the death penalty (New Hampshire abolished the death penalty in 2019, Colorado in 2020, and Virginia in 2021). Afternoon workshop sessions will focus on restorative justice programs, the role mitigation specialists play in capital cases, District Attorney elections, and faith perspectives on the death penalty.

TCADP will present its 2022 awards to five individuals who have deepened our understanding of the legacy of the death penalty, inspired us with their zealous advocacy, and moved us with their compassion for others. The following individuals will receive Appreciation Awards:

- **Randi Chavez**, the Director of Mitigation and Investigation for Texas Defender Service, where she supervises a team of mitigation specialists who work on pre-trial and post-conviction cases across the state. Randi has devoted most of her career as a social worker to advocating for those facing death sentences and those sentenced to death.
- **Richard Ellis**, a capital defense attorney who has represented more than 20 death-sentenced Texans in their federal habeas appeals since 1993. He has obtained nearly a dozen stays of execution for his Texas clients in various state and federal courts.
- **Marv Knox**, the founder and recently retired Director of Fellowship Southwest, an ecumenical network that supports practical ministry and social justice advocacy across several states.

Two individuals will receive Media Awards:

- **Maurice Chammah**, a journalist with *The Marshall Project* and the author of *Let the Lord Sort Them: The Rise and Fall of the Death Penalty*.
- **Patrick Forbes**, the director of "The Phantom," a documentary film that tells the tragic story of Carlos DeLuna, who was wrongfully executed by the State of Texas in 1989.

The TCADP 2022 Annual Conference will take place on Zoom from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM Central Time on Saturday, February 26, 2022. The keynote address and awards ceremony will take place from 10:30 AM to 11:45 AM Central Time. Contact TCADP Executive Director Kristin Houlié Cuellar at kristin@tcadp.org to receive the Zoom links to join live.

The full schedule is listed below. Detailed information about the panelists, keynote speaker, and award recipients is available here: <http://tcadp.org/what-we-do/annual-conference/>.

TCADP is a statewide, grassroots advocacy organization based in Austin.

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TCADP 2022 Annual Conference Schedule

9:00 AM: TCADP 2022 Annual Conference Welcome and Executive Director's Report on the State of the Death Penalty in Texas

9:30 AM: Panel discussion: "Transforming Justice Nationwide: Reflections from States That Recently Abolished the Death Penalty" featuring Rev. Dr. LaKeisha Cook, Denise Maes, and Barbara Keshen; moderated by Ellic Shahualla

10:30 AM: Keynote address by Sister Helen Prejean

11:00 AM: Presentation of the TCADP 2022 Awards

11:45 AM: Break

12:30 PM: Workshop sessions

- Faith Perspectives on the Death Penalty
- Transforming Justice Through Credible Messengers
- District Attorney Elections: Why They Are Important and How You Can Be Involved
- The Role of Mitigation Specialists in Capital Cases

1:30 PM: Next steps for abolition and adjournment with a surprise guest