

<http://www.prisontalk.com/forums/archive/index.php/t-77298.html>

Project wants to free man who's been in prison 24 years

More joining fight of inmate convicted of attempted murder

By Lawrence Budd

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CINCINNATI | — The Ohio Innocence Project and Rebecca Hopfer's clemency lawyer are working to free an Ohio inmate they believe has spent 24 years in prison for a crime he didn't commit.

Gary Reece, 45, of North Olmsted will appear before the Ohio Adult Parole Authority in November, following efforts by the Innocence Project set up earlier this year at the University of Cincinnati law school and Columbus lawyer Madry Ellis.

In 1979, Reece was sentenced to 15 to 75 years in prison for attempted murder, rape and aggravated robbery in Cuyahoga County.

His parole has been blocked in part through the efforts of Kimberly Croft, who told the jury in Reece's trial that he was the man who raped and attacked her in her apartment in North Olmsted.

Croft still maintains a Web site for victims, Crime-Guide4All.com. Since the trial, she has mounted a high-profile campaign to keep Reece behind bars.

Four times, his parole has been recommended, but ultimately rejected by the state parole board. However, parole officials agreed to meet with Reece in November after appeals by Ellis and the Cincinnati-based Innocence Project.

His is the only case not involving DNA picked up by the group at the Cincinnati law school, according to a brief they filed with state parole officials in October. Misidentifications cleared up by DNA testing are the primary focus of the original Innocence Project in New York, as well as similar offices set up in more than 30 other states and Australia.

In an affidavit submitted to the state parole authority by the Ohio Innocence Project, ex-boyfriend Rick Porter describes Croft, whom he knew as Kim Dietrich, as a self-mutilator and acting student who staged assaults on herself to draw attention. Croft has dismissed Porter's claims.

Ellis and the Ohio Innocence Project are the latest advocates to join in Reece's case.

In 2000, Jana Schroeder of the Dayton-based Ohio Criminal Justice Program of the American Friends Service Committee, appeared before state parole officials on Reece's behalf.

The Nevada-based Diogenes Group joined after voice stress analyses raised questions about Croft's believability, while indicating Reece's continued claims of innocence were believable.

Ellis, a former public defender, represented Hopper, the Centerville woman granted clemency by Gov. Bob Taft in May after serving almost eight years for murdering her newborn daughter in 1995.

Last year, Ellis was contacted by a lawyer in Taft's office about taking up Reece's case after the Diogenes Group appealed to the governor's office on Reece's behalf, according to Orest Holubec, the governor's spokesman.

"It's never happened to me. It was a pleasant surprise," Ellis said. "This was the governor's staff attorney. I couldn't turn it down."

Taft denied Reece's clemency on March 12, 2004, Holubec said.

Still, Ellis is confident the parole board will grant Reece parole — leading to his release early in 2005.

"There's a strong indication they won't be rejecting parole," Ellis said.

If released, Reece plans to move to suburban Cincinnati with his wife, whom he met and married while in prison. He recently transferred from state prison in Marion to Chillicothe, where he anxiously awaits his date with the parole board.

"I can fight better to clear my name as a free man than I can in handcuffs behind bars," he said.

Article found here:

http://www.daytondailynews.com/localnews/content/localnews/crime_index.html
(http://www.daytondailynews.com/localnews/content/localnews/crime_index.html)

<http://www.law.uc.edu/institutes-centers/ohio-innocence-project/significant-cases/gary-reece>

Gary Reece - Paroled February 2005

Gary Reece served 25 years in prison for a crime that did not happen. He was convicted in 1980 for attempted murder and rape based solely on the eyewitness testimony of the complaining witness, who claimed that Reece raped and stabbed her in her apartment. An investigation by a Cleveland TV station revealed that the complaining witness' testimony was unreliable and that she, in fact, was mentally ill. The complaining witness failed a voice stress examination while Reece had passed several polygraphs. In an interview with the Cleveland station, the complaining witness indicated that Gary Reece had actually killed her on the day in question, but that "Snow White and the Seven Dwarves" had brought her back to life. Investigation by OIP students uncovered that the complaining witness had a history of self-mutilation, which explained the injuries that she suffered on the day of the alleged crime. In addition, before the "crime" in this case took place, she had told the same story to other individuals, claiming that it had happened early in the 1970s when she was still a high school student. Reece was released in February 2004. He is now a successful public speaker. More information about Mr. Reece can be found on his [website](#).

For more information:

- Freed Inmate Visits Law School that Helped Get Him Released, Cleveland Plain Dealer, Feb. 25, 2005
- Channel 5 Cincinnati, [Wrongly Imprisoned Man Comes Home Reece Released After 25 Years Behind Bars](#), Feb. 23, 2005
- Roy Wood, [UC Law Students Convince Board: Man is Innocent](#), Cincinnati Post, Dec. 18, 2004
- Innocence Project Wins Freedom For Innocent Man, Cleveland Plain Dealer, Dec. 15, 2004

<http://magazine.uc.edu/favorites/web-only/Innocence.html>

Wrongfully convicted prisoners successfully freed by the Innocence Project

No. 1 — Gary Reece (2005)

After 25 years behind bars and five failed parole requests, an Amelia, Ohio, man received parole in February 2005 thanks in part to UC law students who intervened through the Ohio Innocence Project. Gary Reece had 50 years remaining on his sentence for rape and attempted murder, a conviction based almost entirely upon the testimony of a woman who claimed he had attacked her.

One and a half year's worth of student research introduced significant new evidence to a parole hearing, including the facts that no forensic evidence linked Reece to the crime, Reece had passed lie-detector tests that the woman repeatedly failed, the woman had a history of self-mutilation practices consistent with the injuries she reported following the alleged attack and her former boyfriend filed an affidavit casting doubt on her truthfulness. Several of the students gathered to greet Reece at his release.

Update: Gary Reece died of cancer in July 2010, after being wrongfully jailed for 25 years and being free for 6.