



Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Yeshiva University



QUATTRONE CENTER

for the Fair Administration of Justice



**FAIR AND JUST
PROSECUTION**

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**NATIONAL CONVENING BRINGS TOGETHER EXONEREES, ELECTED PROSECUTORS
& EXPERTS IN CONVICTION INTEGRITY**

Event shines light on role of accountability and transparency for an equitable criminal justice system

LOS ANGELES— [Fair and Just Prosecution](#) (FJP) hosted a groundbreaking conversation on Monday, October 23, among exonerees, national experts in criminal justice, and elected prosecutors from across the United States who are part of a growing movement committed to bringing greater accountability and transparency to prosecutive offices. The convening was held at the **Quattrone Center for the Fair Administration of Justice, University of Pennsylvania School of Law**.

“I spent more than a decade in prison, some of it on death row, before DNA testing cleared my name. I am the 100th former death row inmate freed since 1976 because of innocence but I will not be the last,” said **Ray Krone**, Co-Founder of **Witness to Innocence (WTI)**. “I am heartened that we have elected prosecutors who are willing to take a hard look at past mistakes and take to heart how we avoid these injustices from reoccurring.”

The gathering also included perspectives from: **Michael Morton**, who served 24 years in prison before he was exonerated for the killing of his wife; **Sabrina Butler-Smith**, who was a teenage mother when she was wrongly convicted and sentenced to death for the killing of her nine-month-old son; and **Cornelius Dupree**, who spent 30 years in prison before DNA evidence conclusively exonerated him.

“This convening brought elected prosecutors face-to-face with what our justice system looks like – and the devastating impact it has on individuals – when things go horribly wrong,” said **Miriam Krinsky**, a former federal prosecutor and **Executive Director of Fair and Just Prosecution**. “This gathering forged an invaluable commitment among a group of diverse stakeholders - people who have been directly harmed by injustice and who collectively spent *over 70 years* in custody for crimes for which they were later exonerated, elected prosecutors who value meaningful accountability, and respected national experts – as we seek to work together to develop new thinking and concrete strategies to promote a system with enhanced safeguards and fortified integrity review processes.”

Nearly 3,000 prosecutors throughout the U.S. are responsible for making decisions that affect the lives of millions of people. A disproportionate number of Americans exposed to injustice are poor or people of color.

Elected officials in attendance at this gathering included: **Aramis Ayala**, State Attorney, 9th Judicial Circuit (Orlando), Florida; **Mark Dupree**, District Attorney, Wyandotte County (Kansas City), Kansas; **Kim Gardner**, Circuit Attorney, City of St. Louis, Missouri; **Eric Gonzalez**, Acting District Attorney, Brooklyn, New York; **Marilyn Mosby**, State's Attorney, City of Baltimore, Maryland; **Melissa Nelson**, State Attorney, 4th Judicial Circuit (Jacksonville), Florida; **Kim Ogg**, District Attorney, Harris County (Houston), Texas; and **Andrew Warren**, State Attorney, 13th Judicial Circuit (Tampa), Florida.

The day included a discussion of key takeaways, common patterns and lessons learned from innocence cases and wrongful convictions, with insights from **Witness to Innocence Board Member Dick Dieter**, and **Nina Morrison, Senior Staff Attorney at the Innocence Project**. There was also a discussion around strategies for implementing front-end policies to prevent wrongful convictions and best practices for creating conviction integrity units, with perspectives and valuable thinking from **Rebecca Brown** (Director of Policy, Innocence Project), Acting **DA Eric Gonzalez** (Brooklyn), **John Hollway** (Director, Quattrone Center on Fair Administration of Justice), **Mina Malik** (Harvard Professor and Deputy Attorney General for the Public Safety Division, **Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia**) and **Courtney Oliva** (Director, NYU's Center on the Administration of Criminal Law).

"We applaud Fair and Just Prosecution for organizing this conversation and important day," said **Nina Morrison, Staff Attorney at the Innocence Project**. "There is no substitute for proximity with those most impacted and hearing human stories as we seek to understand how our justice system can do better."

"We are pleased to host these forward-looking prosecutors as they work to improve accuracy and reduce crime in their jurisdictions," said **John F. Hollway of Penn Law's Quattrone Center for the Fair Administration of Justice**. "Preventing errors, building out conviction integrity units, and a thorough assessment of all actors and practices as part of a just cause analysis of past mistakes improves the quality of the system and promotes transparency, accountability, and justice for all."

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