



Abolition Summit - Excerpts of Keynote Speaker Diann Rust-Tierney of NCADP...

"I am excited to be here to be a part of the push for abolition in 2015. The National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty has been a long-time partner with KCADP and I have been humbled and instructed by the dedication and the approach that you take to this work.

Why do I believe in Kansas? In a world where kindness is mistaken for weakness and the currency is how biting or disparaging a comment you can make about your opponent, you have the opportunity to get it right. Where the norm is an unexamined fidelity to your own point of view, you have the opportunity to create and set a new standard. You and the leadership of this organization present the alternative. And that is why I believe Kansas will win.

Kansas, you are the change that we want to see. So what are we struggling for? What is this all about? It is about how to stop the killing. But Kansas isn't Texas or Missouri or

Oklahoma. You are not killing on average one person a month. Then, Kansas—what are you struggling for? You are struggling so that Kansas never goes down the path that Texas, Missouri, and Oklahoma have chosen. You are struggling so that public officials in Kansas never think it is ok to kill a man or woman and keep the means by which they plan to do it a secret. You struggle so that Kansas never has to descend into that pit of despair.

Recently, I had the opportunity to be part of a panel of people speaking about the struggle to end the death penalty in the United States. It was held at the home of the Ambassador to the Netherlands. The Ambassador began his remarks by welcoming us into his home and expressing his respect and affection for the United States. But he was also emphatic in stating clearly that the United States must end the death penalty because it is a human rights violation.

So you what are you struggling for? You struggle to bring the light to Kansas. You struggle to bring the light to the nation. We have been in a trance. We abhor murder. We hate violence. We are angered in ways that frighten us when we hear of the callous, brutal and stupid ways that one of us has harmed another and sent ripples of pain through a family and a community. That person who murders has broken our social compact and there must be consequences and there must be remediation. But we are in a trance when we think that we can respond to the harm by breaking that contract again.

KCADP has built great a great staff and a broad base of support over the years. All of the hard work of Kansans will pay off. With all the long-time supporters and the new people that have joined the effort, Kansas is positioned to make big national news.

You are in the heart of the county, with a strong rural constituency. It

has been conventional wisdom that anti-death penalty supporters are all progressives and generally Democrats. Kansas can prove that isn't true and open eyes in other states. A Kansas win will validate the idea that people from all walks of life and all political persuasions can come together on this issue.

When you do this Kansas, you will do this for all of us. You will lay down a marker and rewrite the political history of this effort.

I am here because I believe in you Kansas!"



*Diann Rust-Tierney
NCADP Executive Director*

Statewide Abolition Conferences...

In 2014 we hosted three separate Regional Abolition Conferences across the state!

The Salina Regional Abolition Conference featured two incredible speakers: Carolyn Zimmerman shared her experience as the daughter of a murder victim speaking out against the death penalty, and Darryl Burton gave a powerful keynote presentation of his personal account of wrongful conviction. We are grateful for the hospitality of the K-State Salina campus, and the Social Work Program.

The Kansas City Regional Confer-

ence brought together a nice crowd at Rainbow Mennonite Church in Kansas City, Kansas. The event featured an amazing line up of speakers -- Ray Krone provided the keynote addressed and then participated in a full group discussion panel with fellow exonerees Darryl Burton and Reggie Griffin. Together, KCADP's three guests represented well over 60 years spent wrongfully in prison. The group also heard from KCADP chair Donna Schneweis and vice chair Ron Wurtz who discussed policy and progress in Kansas and the rest of the United

States.

The Western Kansas Conference was held in Buhler, KS, home of Rep. Steven Becker who opened the conference by welcoming the audience and thanking the key note speakers. Following his introductory remark, Sylvester and Vicki Schieber, whose daughter, Shannon, was murdered, shared their story of forgiveness and why they oppose the broken system of the death penalty. As murder victim parents, they stressed that they are

strictly against the death penalty for several reasons. Following the Schiebers, Public Defender Jeffery Wicks gave a detailed explanation about why Kansas needs to abolish the death penalty, based on his extensive experience in practicing law. Jeff also highlighted what is expected from each and every one of the participants to make this effort for repeal succeed.

Thank you to everyone who was able to attend our conferences!

JUSTICE WITHOUT A DOUBT.