



Missouri Lifeline

Volume 4, No. 2

Summer 2010

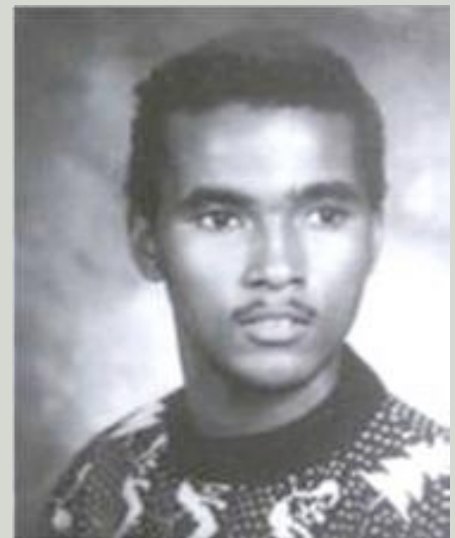
Amnesty International Releases Report on the Reggie Clemons Case

by Laura Moye of Amnesty International

Amnesty International is raising the volume in the call for justice in a case that exemplifies the very worst problems in our death penalty system. The Reggie Clemons case illustrates why the death penalty in the US is a human rights violation and why the death penalty is irredeemably flawed. On May 11, we released our brand new report about the Reggie Clemons case, called "USA: Model Criminal Justice? Death by Prosecutorial Misconduct and a "Stacked Jury".

Read the report on Amnesty International's website, www.aiusa.org. Amnesty International calls on the state of Missouri to acknowledge the many well-established injustices in the case and to commute the death sentence of Reggie Clemons. We stand with MADP in the ongoing call for a study of the state's death penalty and a halt to executions. We know that the death penalty wastes huge financial resources, being more expensive than permanent

imprisonment. These funds could better serve communities if channeled into proven crime control measures and services for victims' families. We urge Missouri lawmakers to take a closer look at the problems with the death penalty, consider more constructive solutions to violent crime and recognize that the time has come for its abolition. <>



Reggie Clemons

The Push for Repeal

For several years, MADP has led a coalition of organizations to seek a moratorium on executions and a study of the death penalty system in Missouri. It was an exercise in measured politics toward the goal of ending the state's death penalty system. Now, many of the big questions have been answered and the time for measured politics is over. We know that the death penalty system in Missouri is broken. We know that it is ineffective, brutally unfair and extremely expensive.

It is important to note that the years we spent working for moratorium were valuable. We learned a lot. We built significant relationships. Almost 400 businesses, religious organizations, community groups, and social justice organizations signed moratorium resolutions. Hundreds attended our Lobby Day rallies in Jefferson City, talking with legislators about what's wrong with the death penalty system in

Missouri. We have raised serious questions, developed an effective statewide organization and built a strong movement.

Now, from that base, it is time to push for repeal of the death penalty.

Repeal now, because we can demonstrate that the death penalty system in Missouri is broken. It is unfair and arbitrarily used. It is a system that invites mistakes and prejudices. Three men under a death sentence in Missouri have been exonerated. Reggie Clemons' case, comprehensively presented in the recent Amnesty International report, exemplifies the heightened roles that racism, ineffectual capital defense, political posturing and prosecutorial misconduct play in how Missouri often seeks and secures a death sentence. **Repeal now**, because there is not a civic answer to the most basic public policy question: What is it for? What does the death penalty provide for Missouri citizens? The claim that the

death penalty deters crime has not been validated. Columbia Law School Professor Jeffrey Fagan has analyzed recent studies claiming that capital punishment deters murders. Those studies, according to Fagan, "fall apart under close scrutiny." He says that they "are fraught with technical and conceptual errors ... and other deficiencies." A 2009 study reported in the *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* indicates that 88% of the country's top criminologists do not think that the death penalty acts as a deterrent to homicide. See *Repeal p. 4*

From MADP's Director

Have you ever moved from one city to another? If so, then you know that transitions, when you're in the midst of them, sometimes feel like the achievement of careful planning and, at other times, feel like the messy chaos of change.

That's true for organizations, as well, that make fundamental shifts in strategy and tactics. Almost a year ago, in a MADP board retreat, our directors plotted a course to move away from seeking a moratorium and study and to work for an outright repeal of the death penalty in Missouri. MADP has always sought to end the death penalty and that's still our ultimate goal. The work for moratorium was an important and necessary step toward that goal. This year we take the next step. I hope you will read the front-page article, The Push for Repeal, to see more about why we are making this transition now.

We will continue to encourage strong chapter growth and grassroots actions in Columbia, Kansas City, Springfield and

St Louis. And we will reach out to rural counties to build relationships and talk about the cost of the death penalty system in the context of shrinking public treasury and increasing need for public services, like education, health care and public safety programs. We are grateful to the local Catholic Campaign for Human Development for a grant to start this work in rural counties in northwest Missouri.

We are reaching out to new members and new leaders across the state, encouraging new ideas and new methods, as we engage in the push for repeal. In June, our board of directors is bringing on at least four new members. New chapter leaders are stepping up.

Our staff, Renee, TC, Kathleen and I have crafted work plans based on the repeal focus and have been working to develop our grassroots base into a groundswell of support for repeal. New relationships with law enforcement and victims' advocates are emerging and bringing different and important perspectives to our work. Tweaking our message. Changing our forms, t-shirts,

buttons, and brochures. There are many things to consider as we shift our focus to gain an outright repeal of the death penalty. As I said, some days I feel the intense energy of careful planning; other days, the messy agitation of making change.

I ask you to join this new push for repeal. Join the careful planning. Join the agitation. Be one of the 500 who give \$5 or more each month to sustain MADP's work. Get involved however you can.

I hope you can attend the MADP Annual Meeting in Kansas City on Saturday, June 26, 2 pm. Our guest speaker, Ron Hampton, Executive Director of the National Black Police Association, will share a law enforcement perspective and speak to the need for repeal in Missouri. Let us know to expect you by going to our website www.madpmo.org and responding to the prompt for attending. I look forward to seeing you in Kansas City on June 26.<>

-Donnie

No Tomorrow

by Sarah Beasley



MADP, working with partner organizations, will show the documentary NO TOMORROW four times, free of charge, in different cities in Missouri between now and October. For dates and locations in your area, please see our website: www.madpmo.org.

The film focuses on the murder of Risa Bejarano, the principle subject of a prior documentary by the same producers that chronicles the experiences of teenagers leaving foster care. NO TOMORROW explores how the prior film about Risa unexpectedly became the centerpiece of a homicide investigation and a trial that would determine whether the alleged killer would live or die.

Recently Sarah Beasley, MADP Kansas City Chapter member, saw the documentary and shares her perspective:

"NO TOMORROW is a unique, enthralling & thought-provoking documentary about the death penalty. I have watched many films on this important topic and this is my favorite. This film focuses on a murder trial in California and includes all the players: the victim, the suspect, the defense, the prosecution, the homicide detectives as well as jurors and loved ones of the victim and defendant. The unusual aspect of this story demonstrates how drastically our lives can be altered in "the information era" and how these changes are now having a huge impact in the criminal justice system. The filmmakers find themselves in an uncomfortable position as the prosecutor utilizes their film to their benefit. New technology can play enlightening, intrusive or manipulative roles in society, and "No Tomorrow" displays some of the quandaries that are arising in our courts. Anti- and pro-death penalty views are expressed in the film and are enhanced by the inclusion of commentary from leading scholars & experts from both sides of the issue. The viewer also learns

Each week, Donnie sends an update of what's happening in MADP. If you would like to receive the "This Week in MADP" email, go to www.madpmo.org and click on "Join the MADP Email list."

about the surrounding dilemmas of what happens after a person is sentenced to death in California: the harsh realities of prison life on death row, the appeal process and the financial drain on the entire state. Another element that I found myself reflecting upon, for weeks after viewing, was the impossible & megalomaniacal role that jurors are placed in - responsible for deciding whether or not to kill another human. The main reason that I would recommend this film to anyone, but especially my fellow activists, is because it is fast-paced and educational without being preachy. Also, it is a great catalyst for a healthy discussion about the complexities of the death penalty."<>



From the West

by Renee Boman

Spring marks the beginning of tabling season for MADP chapters and activists across the state. Community events, festivals, farmers markets and art walks all provide great opportunities for us to educate the public about the need for repeal. Our chapters are hard at work locating events, staffing the tables and maintaining a presence in the community.

In Kansas City, Springfield and St Joseph, members are working to meet with legislators over the summer to voice their concerns about the death penalty, its cost to Missouri tax payers in dollars and other services, and the need for repeal.

With the help of our friends and affiliates, MADP is stepping up its outreach and educational efforts in rural areas. We are working to plan events in rural Northwest communities with a focus on citizen lobbying and education.

MADP is also working to diversify our organization by forming new relationships, partnering with racial and social justice organizations and maintaining a presence in diverse communities.

With so much going on, we need your help! Plenty of volunteer opportunities are available. Please visit your local chapter meeting and call me at (314)583-0231 to find out how you can get involved.<>



From the East

by TC Parsons

As the Missouri legislative session came to a close in mid May, it closed out a busy few months for MADP in Eastern, MO. The Columbia chapter had a showing of the documentary, "Borrowed Time", which highlights the Reggie Clemons case, at both the Ragtag Theater in Columbia, and in Jefferson City for legislators to view, and will host a showing of "No Tomorrow" in June.

The St. Louis chapter just held its first annual dinner, where they awarded John W. Simon, phd, the Spotlight Award, and few went away empty handed after the silent auction. The chapter also held a showing of the Reggie Clemons documentary, and is planning an event on the needs of murder victim family members in July, and will team up with AFSC to show "No Tomorrow" in September.

In Cape Girardeau, a group of very hard working and devoted activists meet monthly to work on reaching out to groups to start dialoguing about the death penalty, in an area where allies seem less abundant.

As we turn towards repeal, it is especially important to remember that repealing the death penalty is something both liberals and conservatives can connect with. Each of our chapters have held trainings on how better to reach out to conservatives in the past couple of months, and it is an exciting time as we work to build a coalition that will repeal the death penalty in Missouri.

Want to get involved in planning, tabling, learning and/or working to repeal the death penalty in Missouri? Come to a chapter meeting. If you are not near one of our chapters but still want to get involved, give me a call at 314-556-9267.<>

I am a MADP Sustaining Donor



Margaret Phillips, St Louis, past board chair of MADP:

"I like the automatic monthly payment option--much better than pulling out the checkbook and writing a check. This way it's painless! And having it be regular and reliable means MADP can count on it in budgeting--and that makes it easier to keep our hardworking staff! Actually I find that a small monthly amount adds up to more than I had been giving yearly by writing a check once a year, and yet it's barely detectable."

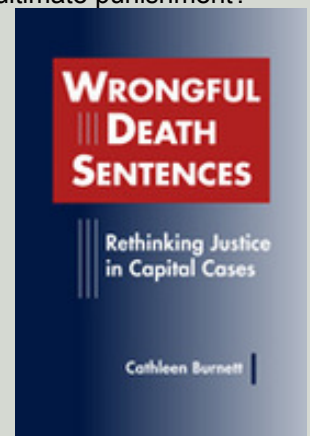
Join Margaret as a Sustaining Donor of MADP. Use the attached envelope or go to our website, www.madpmo.org, to sign up today to secure our movement's work toward a day when there will be no death penalty system in Missouri. We have an ambitious goal of reaching 500 sustaining donors giving \$5 or more per month by September 2011.

A sustaining donor supports the work of MADP to end the death penalty system in the state of Missouri by donating \$5 or more each month. By giving regularly through recurring automatic donations, you help us build a strong foundation for the work of educating and organizing for alternatives to the death penalty.

To join MADP as a member and sustaining donor: Go to www.madpmo.org and click on Donate. On the Donate page, click on Become a Sustaining Donor.<>

New Book by Cathleen Burnett

What acts truly deserve the death penalty? And how equitably do we apply this ultimate punishment?



For more information and to purchase, http://www.rienner.com/title/Wrongful_Death_Sentences_Rethinking

Legislative Update

by Jeff Stack

The 2010 legislative session, dominated by budget shortfalls and political posturing for the fall elections, had small victories for MADP.

The session concluded with Democratic senators successfully thwarting a regressive effort to narrow the Missouri Supreme Court's proportionality review of death-penalty cases. Sens. Jolie Justus (KC), Joan Bray, Rita Days and Joe Keaveny (St. Louis), were prepared to filibuster two House omnibus bills in the final days of the session. Republican lawmakers wanted to add a provision limiting the review of capital convictions only to other death penalty cases. The Court's majority, earlier this year had ruled it appropriate to review murder convictions, in which sentences other than death were imposed to help insure greater fairness. Faced with the prospect of a filibuster, GOP leaders declined to bring the legislation up for floor debate. Lobbyists with the ACLU, Missouri Catholic Conference, the Missouri Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers and MADP provided support for the resisting lawmakers.

The legislative session began positively in January with a third of all Representatives from both parties co-sponsoring House Bill 1683 calling for an execution moratorium and a death-penalty study. Rep. Bill Deeken (R-Jefferson City) was thankfully the lead sponsor as he had been for the previous several terms. House Speaker Ron Richards however, declined to even assign HB 1683 to a committee during the entire term, despite the urging of dozens of Missourians who responded to MADP action alerts.

A similar moratorium/study measure, Senate Bill 930 and SB 591 to repeal the death penalty, were both assigned to a committee but never given public hearings. About 130 concerned citizens attended the inspiring Moratorium Now! rally and lobby day in March. We are thankful for the efforts of many individuals across the state who took actions over the past several months. <>

Repeal Continued from p.1

Prosecuting death penalty cases does not provide better public safety programs or criminal justice systems. In fact, because it consumes state and county resources at an enormous rate, using more court days, more attorneys, more security personnel, and more legal and investigative specialists, the death penalty system actually appropriates resources away from effective public safety programs and usurps other criminal justice processes. A 2009 poll of U.S. Police Chiefs found that death penalty was considered the least efficient use of taxpayers' money. Chief James Abbott, of New Jersey, said bluntly, "Give a law enforcement professional like me that [money], and I'll show you how to reduce crime. The death penalty isn't anywhere on my list."

Repeal now, because, while Missouri's death penalty system consumes enormous resources, our state is facing severe budget cuts this year and an even worse budget deficit is projected for next year. Governor Jay Nixon expects to have to cut more than \$350 million from the budget before he signs it prior to July 1. Already significant cuts have been made to education, health care, and public safety. Cutting programs "may get the state through the year, but it leaves lawmakers with the same problem next year only worse,"

said MO Asst House Minority Leader J.C. Kuessner, D-Eminence. "The legislature cannot continue putting off the hard work of establishing long-term financial stability."

MADP is going to push for repeal now because the time is ripe for Missourians of all political labels and all perspectives to have honest conversations about what's wrong with the death penalty system. If our representatives can put education on the budget-cutting table, and they did, then we can put the death penalty system on the table.

Repealing the death penalty is entirely possible in Missouri. Other states have done so: New Jersey, 2008; New Mexico, 2009. Still others are very close: Kansas, Montana, and New Hampshire.

Raise your voice. Ask what civic benefit the death penalty provides? Ask how we can measure that benefit? Ask what does it cost us? Speak to your legislator about funding your values. Speak to your neighbors about the kind of public safety and criminal justice programs you want and need. It is time to push for repeal of the death penalty system in Missouri now. <>

MADP Spotlight Award St Louis Chapter



Rose Rita Huelsmann & John Simon

On April 24, the St Louis MADP Chapter held their Spotlight Award Dinner at the St Vincent DePaul Building. The spotlight shined on John Simon.

John holds degrees from Boston, Harvard and Yale Universities. He has practiced in the Missouri Attorney General's Office and the Capital Division of the Missouri State Public Defender System. In 2005, he filed the Michael Taylor legal injection case, and won a stay of execution. He is also involved in the ongoing lethal injection litigation with Reggie Clemons as the lead petitioner.

Currently, John Simon is working with Partners Against State Violence and Racism (PSVR). For more information, contact John at simonjw1@yahoo.com.

At the Spotlight event, more than 50 people enjoyed live music, delicious food, and a silent auction. It was a huge success. Big thanks to the St. Louis MADP Chapter. <>

Chapter Updates:

What we've done & What's next



Cape Girardeau MADP Group

- June 16, next chapter meeting

Columbia MADP Chapter

- June 23, "No Tomorrow" showing
- Aug 9, next chapter meeting

Kansas City MADP Chapter

- Mar 25, hosted happy hour with ACLU2 at the Jukehouse

- Apr 28, Co-hosted panel discussion on Race and the Criminal Justice System with the Urban League Panelists: Jamala Rogers, Justice for Reggie Campaign; Alvin Brooks, former KC mayor pro-tem, community activist and director of the Ad-Hoc group against crime; and Jon Gray, retired judge and practicing attorney
- Tabling: TroostFest, May 22
- Juneteenth, June 12, 1-9pm, Mill Creek Park, JC Nichols Pkwy
- Lee's Summit Days, June 4 (noon-10), 5 (10-10) and 6 (12-5).
- MASW First Friday Forum, June 4, 11:30-12:30, Westport Flea Market, 817 Westport Rd. Donnie on a panel discussion about Missouri's criminal justice system

St Joseph MADP Group

- Members researching spring and summer tabling opportunities

- Members currently working to set appointments to meet with legislators over the summer
- Group focusing on outreach to new members

St. Louis MADP Chapter

- Apr 24, Spotlight Event
- July 1, event on MVFM at SL chapter meeting
- Sept 29, "No Tomorrow" showing at St Louis History Museum

Springfield MADP Chapter

- Tabled Greene County Democrat's Jackson Days
- Two Speaking events held at local church women's groups in April and May
- Launching a letter-to-the-editor campaign through local newspapers and media outlets to discuss the issue of death penalty cost <>

Equal Justice USA: Our partner in the work

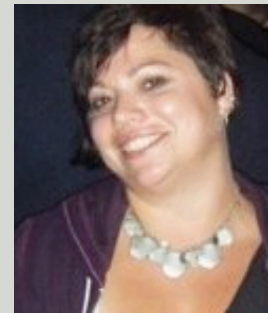
By Donnie Morehouse

This past January, a woman from San Francisco flew into Kansas City in the midst of a snowstorm, with single digit temperatures and piles of snow and ice. She got in my car and we drove straight to a Springfield MADP Chapter meeting. A week later she left from Kansas City, after attending chapter meetings in Springfield, Kansas City, Columbia, and St Louis; facilitating a workshop with our staff and board; attending a MADP board meeting; joining a press conference in Columbia, walking the halls of the capitol building in Jefferson City, meeting dozens of MADP members and traveling hundreds of miles in

Missouri through rain, sleet, snow and ice. Why? Because Mona Cadena, EJUSA state campaign coordinator for Missouri, supports MADP's goals, is personally engaged in our struggle and wants to know, face-to-face, the people who are doing the frontline work in our grassroots effort to end the death penalty in Missouri.

EJUSA works to mobilize and educate ordinary citizens around issues of crime and punishment in the U.S. to build support for an alternative public policy that is both effective and humane. Find out more about EJUSA and sign up for their online newsletter at www.ejusa.org.

EJUSA and Mona, in particular, are MADP's partners in our work to end the



Mona Cadena

death penalty in our state. I speak with Mona at least once a week about what's happening in other states and to get a different perspective on what's happening in Missouri. Colleen Cunningham, former MADP Executive Director, is also a state campaign coordinator and database manager for EJUSA. We work with Colleen regularly to upgrade and utilize our database. Sheri Silberstein is the Executive Director of EJUSA.

MADP is grateful for the support and partnership of EJUSA. And grateful for Mona who, among many helpful acts, once helped push from her side when my car got stuck in the snow. She'll be in Missouri again soon, and hopefully it will be warm. <>

Mail versus Email

We send our newsletter, *Missouri Lifeline*, by email to all of our members; affiliate organizations; and interested individuals for whom we have email addresses. By receiving the newsletter by email you help us to utilize more of our resources for organizing and educating to end the death penalty. We also understand that, for some, email is not a preferred means of receiving the newsletter. Let us know if you prefer to receive it by US Postal Service.

If you received this newsletter from the USPS, then it's because we don't have your email address yet or you've indicated that you'd prefer to receive the *Lifeline* in the mail. To receive it by email only, which helps us contain our costs, please indicate that on the attached envelope and return it to us. Also, you can let us know your email address by contacting our office through our website, www.madp.org, or by phone, 816-931-4177. <>

MADP has more than 450 fans on Facebook. Look for our page and become a fan of MADP.

Calendar of Events

June 3, St Louis chapter meeting
June 4, MASW First Friday Fourm, KC, Westport Flea Market
June 4-6, Lee's Summit Days
June 7, Springfield chapter meeting
June 12, Juneteenth, Millcreek Park KC MO
June 16, Cape Girardeau chapter meeting
June 23, "No Tomorrow" showing in Columbia
June 24, KC chapter meeting
June 26, MADP Annual Meeting in KC

July 1, Event on MVFM at St Louis chapter meeting
July 5, Springfield chapter meeting
July 22, KC chapter meeting

August 2, Springfield chapter meeting
August 5, St Louis chapter meeting
August 9, Columbia chapter meeting
August 26, KC chapter meeting

September 2, St Louis chapter meeting
September 6, Springfield chapter meeting
September 13, Columbia chapter meeting
September 23, KC chapter meeting
September 29, "No Tomorrow" showing at SL History Museum

For more information on these events please visit our website, www.madpmo.org, or call MADP at 816-931-4177.

**You are invited to attend the
Annual Meeting of MADP**

"Push for Repeal"

Saturday June 26, 2010

2 pm

**Bruce R Watkins Cultural Center
3700 Blue Pkwy
Kansas City, MO**

Please join us.

Find out what MADP is doing.

Hear Ron Hampton,

**Executive Director of the National Black
Police Association, share a law
enforcement perspective on ending the
death penalty.**

Let us know to expect you:

www.madpmo.org

Missourians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

201 Westport Rd

Kansas City MO 64111