



CONFRONTING DEATH ROW FROM BOTH SIDES

AN EXONEREE AND A FORMER OREGON PRISON SUPERINTENDENT SPEAK OUT
AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PORTLAND, Oregon – Two men who’ve experienced the devastating impact of the death penalty will be sharing their stories with Oregonians in Portland next week. Anthony Graves spent nearly two decades on death row in Texas for a crime he did not commit while Frank Thompson oversaw the last two state executions to take place in Oregon. They will speak at an event on September 29 and explain why they believe the death penalty should have no place in Oregon’s justice system.

Anthony Graves was wrongly convicted of the murders of six members of a family due to a false accusation by another defendant in the case and the deliberate concealment of mitigating evidence by the prosecutor. Throughout his many years on the row, Graves fought for his life, eventually proving his innocence with the help of attorneys and volunteers who pieced together the evidence needed to free him. Now he speaks out for criminal justice reform and an end to the death penalty.

Frank Thompson is the retired superintendent of Oregon State Penitentiary, where Oregon’s death row is located. He oversaw the only state executions that have taken place in Oregon since the 1960s. In 1996 and 1997, he was responsible for planning, organizing, and leading the executions by lethal injection of two men. The experience changed his mind about the death penalty and today he is a prominent voice in Oregon and elsewhere against capital punishment.

The event, “Death row from both sides”, is organized by Oregon Justice Resource Center, a Portland-based nonprofit that provides free legal services to currently and formerly incarcerated people and also works for criminal justice reform. It will take place September 29 at First Unitarian Church of Portland, hosted by the church’s Ending the New Jim Crow Social Justice Action Group.

“We’re delighted to be able to bring together two such powerful voices on the death penalty as Anthony Graves and Frank Thompson,” said Bobbin Singh, Executive Director of Oregon Justice Resource Center. “Their authority to speak about why capital punishment is a failed policy is unquestionable. They know all too well that it risks killing innocent people and it places an intolerable burden on the prison staff who must carry out executions.”

Tickets for “Death row from both sides” are on sale now online. A reception with Anthony Graves and Frank Thompson will take place before the event with hors d’oeuvres and wine served. Combined tickets to the reception and event cost \$75. Tickets to the event only cost \$30.

Event details

Date: September 29, 2016

Location: First Unitarian Church of Portland, 1211 SW Main Street, Portland, OR 97205
Time: 6 pm reception 7 pm presentations
Tickets: \$75 reception + event, \$30 event only. Free for formerly incarcerated people (contact Amie Wexler at wexler@ojrc.org or 503-563-3356).
Tickets available online from: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/death-row-from-both-sides-race-mass-incarceration-the-wrongly-convicted-tickets-27009684694>

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Interviews can be arranged in advance or on September 29 in Portland when the event takes place. Please contact Alice Lundell for more information.