



March 2015

## **EXTRAORDINARY NEWS - 8th INNOCENT CLIENT RELEASED!**

### **Angel Gonzalez exonerated after 21 years in prison**

On March 10, Angel Gonzalez walked out of Dixon a free and fully exonerated man.

Angel's exoneration and release, in collaboration with the Innocence Project, are **extraordinary achievements for the Illinois Innocence Project**, closely following our client Christopher Abernathy's exoneration and release last month!

For 21 years Angel fought to prove his innocence, after a 1994 conviction put him in prison for a 55-year sentence. He was convicted based on eyewitness identification and a coerced confession, yet no evidence linked him to the crime. Finally, DNA tests just two weeks ago conclusively proved he was not one of the two rapists in the case.

We expect Mr. Gonzalez to join us at our 8th Annual Fundraising event on April 8th at Erin's Pavilion! Please come to CELEBRATE JUSTICE and crucial EYEWITNESS IDENTIFICATION REFORMS aimed at helping to curb wrongful and tragic convictions of innocent people like Mr. Gonzalez.

Please register for the event now: **DEFENDERS REGISTRATION**

Our program will feature Jennifer Thompson and exoneree Ronald Cotton, both victims of a flawed witness identification process. Like Angel and Christopher, Ronald spent years in prison for a crime he did not commit. And Jennifer experienced the horror of a brutal sexual assault and then the horror of learning, through DNA testing, she had unintentionally identified the wrong person.

We also will present Representative Scott Drury and Senator Kwame Raoul our Defenders Award for their sponsorship of eyewitness identification reform legislation, signed into law by Governor Quinn in August.

For more information, please visit [www.uis.edu/innocenceproject](http://www.uis.edu/innocenceproject) or call (217) 206-6569.