



August 2016

Help Free the Innocent

To start out the Fall Semester 2016 at UIS, the Illinois Innocence Project has the distinct honor to welcome Jason Strong to speak to our students, staff, and community on Tuesday evening, August 30 on the UIS campus in the PAC Building, Room 3B starting from 6:30, and continuing until approximately 8:00.

Jason Strong was wrongly convicted in Lake County, Illinois in 2000. When he was convicted, the victim had yet to be identified. The conviction was based on faulty pathology testimony and coerced false confessions from Jason and two co-defendants, who ended up taking deals for two and three years in exchange for testimony against Jason.

Six years later, the victim was finally identified as a developmentally disabled woman from nearby Kanem County. It was discovered that she had been abused and preyed upon by two women who stole her money and even had their friend, a mentally ill man, marry her. This man, it turned out, had confessed to Carpentersville, Illinois law enforcement in 2002 to murdering his wife. Unfortunately, the victim had still not been identified in the Lake County case, and Jason continued to serve his 46-year sentence.

Through the tireless work of the Bluhm Legal Clinic and the Center on Wrongful Convictions, Jason was finally released and exonerated in 2015 through an unprecedented agreement with the Lake County State's Attorney and the Illinois Attorney General. Jason's lawyers were able to show that the confessions were coerced, the alleged co-defendants had recanted, the pathologist's testimony was wildly inaccurate, and that there were multiple viable alternative suspects.

IIP's own Lauren Myerscough-Mueller briefly worked on Jason's case as a law student in the Bluhm Legal Clinic and will introduce Jason at the forum.