



October 2018

Speak Out Against Injustice Today - Wrongful Conviction Day

Today, October 2, is Wrongful Conviction Day (WCD), a day to bring awareness about the causes of and solutions to wrongful convictions, and to recognize the tremendous personal, social and emotional costs of wrongful conviction for innocent people and their families.

Visit our flag display today from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at UIS to honor the 2,271 U.S. men and women (including 237 in Illinois) who have been exonerated since 1989. These innocent people collectively lost over 20,000 years of their lives, as reported in this [Washington Post Opinion](#).

If you're in Chicago, look up. You may see buildings lighting the sky yellow and white, on behalf of IIP, to raise awareness of Wrongful Conviction Day.

Wherever you are, use social media to tell the innocent they are not forgotten!

[Change your profile picture](#) to raise awareness of wrongful convictions.

[Download and share these amazing exoneree photos](#) using #WrongfulConvictionDay. Join the innocence movement's one-hour Twitter Takeover at 2 p.m. CT.

[Sign our "Fix the System" pledge](#) that calls for reform of a racially biased justice system.

Do You Love Social Media?

Become an IIP Social Media Ambassador to promote our first crowdfunding launch in November! All funds raised will help us free the next innocent person. Email [Courtney Reed](#), IIP Development Director, to join our campaign team.

Welcome Back UIS students!

Each fall UIS students rejuvenate our offices with their positive energy and spirit. This year 10 students are already evaluating, researching and presenting cases, and translating Spanish-language applications.

Meet Aaliyah Williams, from Chicago. She interned with IIP last year and has returned as a volunteer while she completes her UIS master's degree in Human Services with a concentration in Alcoholism and Substance Abuse. Her goal is to work with juveniles and young adults who struggle with mental health disorders and substance abuse.

Before working with IIP, Aaliyah knew the criminal justice system was flawed. But she did not realize how many "good, innocent people go to prison" after being wrongfully convicted.

"IIP has taught me that no matter what race you are, you can still be falsely accused of something you did not do," Aaliyah says. "I understand that it takes an immense amount of work and dedication to change the system. However, it is not unattainable."

Meet Sophia Ortega, from Waukegan, IL. She volunteered for IIP last year and is a junior at UIS. Returning students like Sophia are critical to continuing the strong involvement of UIS undergrads in IIP's work. In her second year with us, Sophia will not only carry her own workload but also help guide first-year IIP students who are new to innocence work.

While Sophia's goal is to become an attorney specializing in post-conviction relief, her humanitarian instincts drew her to the Project.

"I could not believe UIS had a project like this," she says. "I instantly knew I wanted to be part of it. I have a passion for helping people and that is something I can do with the Illinois Innocence Project."

The Illinois Innocence Project is a member of the Innocence Network, a worldwide affiliation of innocence organizations, each of which is responsible for its own operational funding. Please ensure your gift goes directly to the ILLINOIS Innocence Project by making your donation using the button below or on our website at <https://www.uis.edu/illinoisinnocenceproject/>.