

Assisting the Wrongfully Convicted *The Innocence Project at the University of Ottawa*

The Innocence Project (Projet d'innocence) of the Department of Criminology at the University of Ottawa is a student-run, pro-bono group that seeks to help Canadian prisoners who have been wrongly convicted establish their innocence. Graduate students and faculty members who were concerned about miscarriages of justice in Canada formed this group in 2011 to address wrongful convictions. We are now in a position to accept applications. Prisoners who have been convicted of a serious offence that they did not commit, who have exhausted all avenues of appeal, and who have no other means of help are encouraged to contact us. Once we have been contacted, we will send an application to the individual through regular mail. Each completed application we receive will be carefully screened. Once accepted, we will work together with individuals to establish if there is any "new or significant" information in their case that indicates a miscarriage of justice likely occurred. This is particularly important, as cases cannot go forward without it. New and significant information could be any of the following:

- Anything that establishes or confirms an alibi;
- Another person's confession;
- Anything that identifies another person at the scene of the crime;
- Scientific evidence that points to innocence or another's guilt;
- Proof that important evidence was not disclosed;
- Proof that shows a witness gave false testimony or substantially contradicts testimony at trial.

What is really significant is that this "fresh" evidence was not examined at the original trial or on appeal or if the applicant only became aware of it following the court proceedings. Also significant is that this new information must be reasonably believable, related to the issue of guilt and would have probably affected the verdict if it had been presented at trial. We understand that these are complicated legal standards created by the courts, but once an application is accepted by our group to go forward, we will work very hard at helping prisoners establish their case. Ultimately, our goal is to help prisoners file a review of their conviction with the Criminal Conviction Review Group (CCRG) at the Department of Justice. The CCRG has the authority to review an application and make recommendations to

the Minister of Justice to re-examine a case if they are convinced that a miscarriage of justice likely occurred. We will also be working with criminal lawyers in Ottawa in filing applications, on prisoners' behalf, to the CCRG.

If you believe that your conviction was in error and needs to be re-opened, please write to us at the following address for an application form:

Innocence Project / Projet d'innocence
c/o Department of Criminology
120 University Private
University of Ottawa
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K1N 6N5

Visit us on Facebook at:
www.facebook.com/InnocenceProjectProjetInnocence