

Press Release

People v. Gerald Simonson

Ericka Sanders, Marion County Public Defender

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Today Gerald Simonson's 17-year journey to his freedom has ended. While he has not admitted guilt and never will, he has entered into an agreement that will ensure he will live out the rest of his life with his wife, Grace, who has vigilantly stood by his side and championed his innocence during his entire incarceration.

In 1993, Gerald Simonson was convicted of murder following a trial by jury, a trial that the 5th District Appellate Court deemed so fundamentally unfair, that Mr. Simonson deserved a new one. Mr. Simonson's arduous journey was led by Kevin McClain of Kevin McClain investigations who has tirelessly worked for the past 12 years to see this day; by Michael McHaney who brilliantly drafted the post-conviction petition that outlined the numerous reasons why Mr. Simonson did not receive a fair trial; by Larry Wells, the Appellate Defender, whose legal advocacy convinced the Appellate Court to order the new trial and give the legal system an opportunity to right the wrongs that occurred in 1993. Since January of this year, investigator Allen Profancik of Kevin McClain Investigations carried on the meticulous investigation that Kevin began 12 years ago, bringing closure to a now 66 year old man's quest for justice.

Marion County State's Attorney Matthew Wilzbach, along with his assistant Melissa Doran, have concluded this case in a manner that comports with the principles of our country's constitutional guarantees. In so doing, the State's Attorney has not only seen to it that a just result occurred but also saved the tax payers of Marion County the tens of thousands of dollars that would necessarily have been spent on a trial of this magnitude. He should be commended.