

Kaczynski to address death penalty forum at Carrol College

1 Feb 2007

Helena, Mont. — David Kaczynski, brother of “Unabomber” Ted Kaczynski; Gary Hilton, former warden of the New Jersey State Prison; Sam Millsap, a former Texas prosecutor; Marietta Jaeger Lane, mother of a murder victim; and J. A. “Ziggy” Ziegler, son of a murder victim, will address a public forum on the death penalty to be held Feb. 6, 2007 in Helena. The event is sponsored by the Montana Abolition Coalition, a coalition of organizations opposed to the death penalty.

In 1996, David Kaczynski turned in his brother, Ted, to authorities after suspecting Ted might be the infamous “Unabomber” who had killed three and injured 23 people with mail bombs. Soon thereafter, David was horrified to find that the authorities whom he had so recently helped were charging Ted with a capital crime for which he could face death.

“It didn’t seem to concern prosecutors that my brother was mentally ill with schizophrenia, or that executing him would discourage other families from following our example in the future.” David Kaczynski now serves as Executive Director of New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty.

Gary Hilton was a warden with the New Jersey Department of Corrections for 33 years before his retirement in 1998. At the beginning of his career, he firmly believed in the death penalty but over the course of his career, he came to believe “that execution is not sound or proper public policy. The irreversible reality of execution must be a major consideration.” From his experience as a warden Hilton now believes the harsh realities of prisoners living out their normal lives in a maximum security prison without any chance of parole serves justice in a more equitable way for all parties, including victims* families and prisoners.

As a Texas District Attorney, Sam Millsap prosecuted Ruben Cantu, who was executed in 1993. After Cantu’s execution, the *Houston Chronicle* uncovered evidence proving Cantu’s likely innocence. Millsap says Cantu “received a perfect trial. And yet, we have determined 21 years later that he may well have been innocent. Whether he was innocent or not, the system failed him completely. The system, as it relates to capital murder, is simply broken,” Millsap said.

The panel will also include two relatives of murder victims, including J.A. “Ziggy” Ziegler, whose father was murdered in Los Angeles, and Marietta Jaeger Lane, whose seven-year-old daughter was abducted and subsequently murdered in 1973.

The Montana Legislature is considering a bill to abolish the death penalty. The legislation’s hearing is slated for 8:00 a.m., Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2007, before the Senate Judiciary located in Room 303 of the Montana State Capitol Building.

The Montana Abolition Coalition is comprised of the Montana Association of Churches, Montana Catholic Conference, Amnesty International, the Montana Human Rights Network, and the ACLU of Montana. The Public Forum is to be held in the Carroll College Commons. The forum is free and open to the public. For further information, contact Ginger Aldrich, of the Montana ACLU, at 461-8176.

The Ted K Archive

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Blackfoot Valley Dispatch, 1 Feb 2007, Page 8.
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