



# JUSTICE FOR JULIUS CLEMENCY CAMPAIGN CASE STUDY

HOW A COALITION OF CONCERNED CITIZENS AND  
ORGANIZATIONS POWERED BY REPRESENT JUSTICE  
HELPED SAVE THE LIFE OF AN INNOCENT MAN ON  
DEATH ROW

REPRESENT  
**JUSTICE**

JUSTICE  
FOR ———  
JULIUS

# JUSTICE FOR JULIUS

## CLEMENCY CAMPAIGN CASE STUDY JULY 2022

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Justice for Julius campaign, powered by Represent Justice, began in March 2020 to support a grassroots effort to save Julius Jones, an innocent Black man, from execution in Oklahoma. In 2018, the Innocence Project and JuVee Productions produced “The Last Defense”, which brought Jones’ story to national attention.

Jones’ case was rife with racial bias, ineffective counsel, and undisclosed evidence. After an international outcry, diverse advocacy across sectors, and celebrity engagement, the campaign culminated in a sentence commutation to Life Without Parole (LWOP) four hours before Julius’ scheduled execution on November 18, 2021. The campaign reached 2.84 billion people on social media, largely thanks to engagement from dozens of prominent influencers, like NBA stars Blake Griffin, Trae Young, and Russell Westbrook; media magnate Kim Kardashian; and some of the nation’s top faith leaders, including Bishop TD Jakes. Over 6.5 million people signed the campaign’s Change.org petition, which was the platform’s number one petition in 2021. Over 528,000 citizens around the country and world took email actions and placed phone calls to the Oklahoma Governor and Pardon and Parole Board.

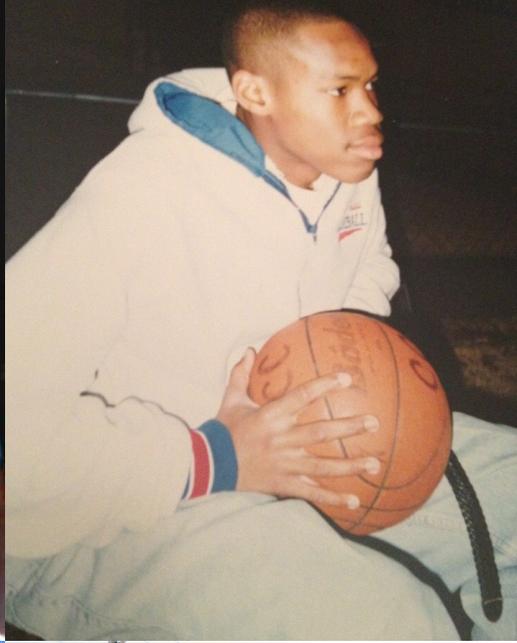
While Julius is still in prison, there is no doubt the campaign played a critical role in the Governor’s decision to commute his death sentence, which now gives Oklahomans future options to bring Julius home. Aided by a robust public awareness strategy which included video storytelling, press

engagement, and hyper-targeted digital content, public opinion [polls released in October 2021](#) showed:

- Nearly 50% of Oklahomans had heard of Julius
- 46% of Oklahomans believed Julius was likely innocent
- 61% of Oklahomans believed Julius’ sentence should be commuted

The impact of the Justice for Julius campaign has been far reaching in Oklahoma and across the country, and has been noted as a model for other death penalty campaigns. To continue the sustainable work, the Julius Jones Institute is being established as a 501(c)3 organization to promote criminal justice reforms, youth interventions, and civic engagement actions and training.





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# PART I. OVERVIEW

## INTRODUCTION TO OKLAHOMA AND THE CASE FOR JULIUS JONES

Justice for Julius is a public awareness campaign that saved the life of Julius Jones, an innocent Black man, from execution in Oklahoma. The campaign represents a significant opportunity to share findings and learnings with the broader criminal justice reform community.

Furthermore, the decision creates precedent for other people on death row to continue to challenge their sentence because of innocence claims.

This case study will provide a summary of campaign strategy, measurable accomplishments, findings, and implications for the broader field of justice reform and community organizing.

There is no doubt that video storytelling and hyper-targeted digital content were critical strategies that centered Julius' humanity and his truth, bringing thousands of Oklahomans proximate to Julius for the first time. Significantly, this storytelling fueled a public opinion shift in Oklahoma that provides a template for community organizing in support of justice system reform during the most challenging landscapes.

## OKLAHOMA JUSTICE SYSTEM BACKGROUND

Oklahoma's criminal legal system has been in crisis for a long time.

Currently ranking third in incarcerations in the U.S., women and people of color continue to bear the brunt of Oklahoma's over-criminalization and incarceration.

Since 1976, Oklahoma has had the highest number of executions per capita, according to the Death Penalty Information Center. In recent times,

Oklahoma's death penalty practices have sparked national debate, namely because of continued racial disparities and botched executions. A study entitled "Race and Death Sentencing for Oklahoma Homicides Committed Between 1990 and 2012" published in the 2017 edition of the *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, concluded that death sentences in Oklahoma are disproportionately distributed to defendants when the victim is white. Prior to this publication, the April 2014 and January 2015 botched executions of Clayton Lockett and Charles Warner became national and international news when the wrong intravenous drugs were used. As a result, Governor Mary Fallin placed a moratorium on executions and established the Oklahoma Death Penalty Review Commission to investigate the state's death penalty process.

The Oklahoma Death Penalty Review Commission spent more than a year studying Oklahoma's death penalty system from the time of arrest to execution. The Commission heard from many individuals with direct knowledge of how the system operates—including law enforcement, prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, families of murdered victims, and the families of those wrongfully convicted. The Commission's report, released in May of 2016, gave a strong critique of Oklahoma's capital punishment, and exposed a variety of failures. As a result of their findings, the Commission recommended the Governor extend the moratorium on executions indefinitely. Below is an excerpt from that report:

*"Due to the volume and seriousness of the flaws in Oklahoma's capital punishment system, Commission members recommend that the moratorium on executions be extended until significant reforms are accomplished.*

*Many of the findings of the Commission's year-long investigation were*

*disturbing and led Commission members to question whether the death penalty can be administered in a way that ensures no innocent person is put to death. Commission members agreed that, at a minimum, those who are sentenced to death should receive this sentence only after a fair and impartial process that ensures they deserve the ultimate penalty of death. To be sure, the United States Supreme Court has emphasized that the death penalty should be applied only to “the worst of the worst.” Unfortunately, a review of the evidence demonstrates that the death penalty, even in Oklahoma, has not always been imposed and carried out fairly, consistently, and humanely, as required by the federal and state constitutions. These shortcomings have severe consequences for the accused and their families, for victims and their families, and for all citizens of Oklahoma.*

*Many Oklahomans support the availability of the death penalty, as evidenced by the vote in favor of State Question 776 in the November 2016 election. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that innocent people have been sentenced to death in Oklahoma. And the burden of wrongful convictions alone requires the systemic corrections recommended in this report.”*

Since 1976, the state has executed 117 people convicted of murder and exonerated 38, including 10 individuals from death row.

## **JULIUS JONES BACKGROUND**

Julius Jones has always maintained his innocence in the murder of Paul Howell. At the time of the crime for which he was convicted, he was a student and athlete with a promising future, just three days into his 19th year and a student at the University of Oklahoma on an academic scholarship. In John Marshall High School, Jones was a member of the National Honor Society and graduated with a class rank of 12 out of 143. He was co-captain of his

football, basketball, and track teams.

In 1999, Paul Howell was shot and killed in Edmond, Oklahoma during the theft of his SUV. The victim’s sister, who was a passenger in the vehicle and witnessed the shooting, testified that the shooter had approximately a half-inch of hair sticking out from underneath a stocking cap.

The witness’s physical description of the man who shot her brother fit that of the state’s star witness, Jones’ co-defendant, but did not fit Jones. Jones’ attorneys failed to show the jury a photograph showing Jones’ very short, crew-cut hair at the time of the crime, proving he could not be the person who the victim’s sister described.

Mr. Jones’ underfunded and inexperienced trial attorneys were three public defenders with no capital trial experience. These inexperienced attorneys failed to adequately cross-examine the co-defendant on the six different and inconsistent statements that he gave to the police after his arrest or demonstrate that he may have been the shooter and may have been testifying against Mr. Jones to avoid the death penalty. Mr. Jones’s trial attorneys also failed to present the testimony of two available witnesses who overheard Mr. Jordan bragging about having pinned his crime on Julius to avoid the death penalty, and with the assurance that he would serve just fifteen years in prison. In fact, Mr. Jones’ trial attorneys did not put on a single witness to testify during the guilt-innocence phase of his trial.

The crime was highly publicized and racially charged from the beginning. The victim was a prominent white man, and the suspects were young Black men. Even before his arrest, Mr. Jones’ picture was broadcast on the local news, where he was described as the killer. Some recall that the then-district attorney, Bob Macy, went on television the night of the shooting to call for the death penalty for the perpetrator. According to Jones, when he was arrested, prior to being put in the police cruiser, an officer removed his handcuffs and said, “Run [n-word], I dare you.”

In November 2017, Mr. Jones' legal team discovered new evidence that at least one juror harbored racial prejudice that influenced his vote to convict and sentence Mr. Jones to death. One juror reported telling the judge about another juror who said the trial was a waste of time and "they should just take the [n-word] out and shoot him behind the jail." The juror reported that the juror who made this comment was never removed, and the court did nothing.

Bob Macy, also known as "Cowboy Bob," was the District Attorney of Oklahoma County in 1999 when Julius was arrested. During his 21 years as the lead prosecutor, he sent 54 men and women to death row — more than any other prosecutor in the U.S. at that time. Since then, over half of those convictions have been reversed, and several defendants exonerated and released from prison as the result of prosecutorial misconduct (in 33% of the cases), false testimony by state forensic scientists, and false informant testimony, among other violations. Harvard Law School's Fair Punishment Project named Macy as the second deadliest prosecutor in U.S. history.



From left to right: Julius Jones, Madeline Jones, Antoinette Jones, Antonio Jones and Anthony Jones

Mr. Howell, the victim of the murder for which Julius was convicted, was a successful businessman living in Edmond, Oklahoma, a community in which 85% of the residents were white in 1999. Howell was a church deacon, father of two, and upstanding member of his community. At that time, the Edmond Police Department was dealing with local fear of "dangerous Black youth," and its detectives were under pressure to find the killer. These fears were underpinned by widespread theories and accompanying legislation in the early 1990s that related to the crack-cocaine epidemic, the increase in crime, and the increase in arrest trends. The term juvenile "super predator" soon entered the public sphere and characterized juveniles as callous sociopaths who committed crimes as a "rite of passage" and were completely detached from the consequences of their behavior.

## THE TRIAL OF JULIUS JONES

Macy appointed one of his most seasoned prosecutors, Sandra Elliott, to try the case against Jones. By contrast, Jones was assigned a court-appointed attorney, David McKenzie, who had never tried a death penalty case, and Robin McPhail Bruno, who had only recently passed the bar exam. Both of Jones' attorneys acknowledge they did not have the experience necessary to adequately represent him. In addition, during jury selection for Jones' trial, Black prospective jurors, except for one, were excluded from jury service on the grounds that they had some criminal histories. Yet, a white man who served on Jones' jury and sentenced him to death had two prior felony convictions that the prosecution did not disclose to Jones' defense.

The FBI lab examiner who testified on the bullet lead comparison analysis was indicted two years later for untruthful testimony in another case. The only eyewitness was the victim's sister, whose description of the shooter's hair under the stocking cap matched Chris Jordan — not Julius Jones. But Jones' attorneys never introduced a booking photo of him taken 9 days prior to the murder, showing that his haircut was short and could not have shown beneath the cap. Jones' attorneys did not call any witnesses — a decision

McKenzie shared with Jones for the first time when the prosecution rested its case. Jones' parents and brother and sister never had the chance to testify that he was with them at home at the time of the shooting. While an eyewitness reported the shooter wore a bandana during the crime, DNA testing of the bandana found in Jones' home was not done at the time of the trial. In addition, the defense did not point out the major discrepancies between Jordan's and King's trial testimony and their statements to police, or that Jones barely knew Lottie or King. Most importantly, prosecutors never informed Jones' attorneys that Lottie, the person who gave the police King, who in turn gave them Jordan, was a long-time police informant who got favorable treatment from the police in exchange for being their informant. Nor did they inform Jones lawyers that King was an informant for the Edmond Police and had a pending bogus check charge at that time with three prior felonies that, without his favorable testimony, would have resulted in a 20-year sentence. Nor that Jordan, whom the jury was told by prosecutors had agreed to a 30-year sentence to avoid the death penalty, had in fact agreed to a sentence whereby he would be released in only 15 years – which is exactly what happened. In the end, Jones was yet another victim of Bob Macy and was convicted and sentenced to death in 2002.

## DEATH ROW

For approximately 22 years, Jones sat on death row at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester, Oklahoma. His family — Anthony, Madeline, Antoinette, and Antonio, along with Julius' best friend, Jimmy Lawson — were his main sources of support during that time. As a result of his conviction, the Jones family suffered significant financial loss, along with physical and emotional distress. Mr. Jones, the patriarch of the family, endured severe health declines which forced him to retire from his work as a cement mason. Mrs. Jones came out of retirement to return to teaching elementary school to meet the family's financial obligations. Though remaining active in the community, the stigma of having a family member on death row impacted

the employment opportunities and remained as a dark cloud over the family for many years. The Jones family have received countless threats and experienced numerous vandalisms since Jones' conviction of murder.

## “THE LAST DEFENSE”

In 2018, Academy Award winner Viola Davis, JuVee Productions, and the NY Innocence Project produced an ABC News documentary called *The Last Defense*, which highlighted the Julius Jones case. After viewing the documentary, Rev. CeCe Jones-Davis (no relation) began grassroots organizing in Oklahoma City to advocate for Jones. Among other activations, Rev. Jones-Davis launched a Change.org petition asking Governor Stitt and the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board for clemency for Julius Jones. She also curated the Julius Jones Coalition in partnership with Dr. Karlos Hill and the University of Oklahoma's African and African American Studies Department to organize community members in-person and online to develop advocacy strategies. The Julius Jones Coalition hosted regular community forums, screenings of *The Last Defense*, legislative lobby days, and more. The coalition also began building Justice for Julius digital media platforms and sharing Jones' story with national influencers.

After hosting screenings of the feature film *Just Mercy*, which centers on the story of an innocent Black man on death row in Alabama and his fight for freedom, in January 2020, music producer, host of the *Wrongful Conviction Podcast*, and Innocence Project board member Jason Flom connected Jones-Davis with *Just Mercy* Executive Producer, Scott Budnick. Flom had become acquainted with Julius Jones' by way of phone calls and letters and was eager to help. Budnick garnered further support from other prominent influencers and introduced Jones-Davis to Represent Justice, a nonprofit dedicated to harnessing the power of storytelling to change the justice system. The Justice for Julius campaign launched at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020.

## JUSTICE FOR JULIUS CAMPAIGN 2019-2021



Rev. Cece Jones-Davis speaking at rally outside Julius' clemency hearing.

Jones filed a clemency application with the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board in October 2019. For at least a year prior to that filing, the Jones family and attorneys had requested a copy of Jones' full legal file from Oklahoma County District Attorney David Prater – a mentee of former D.A. Bob Macy – to no avail. In June of 2020, former Attorney General Mike Hunter confirmed that any person on death row, including Julius Jones, was eligible for commutation by state law. Shortly after this confirmation, Hunter held a press conference in support of the victim's family and to publish a 20-page document reiterating Jones' guilt. He stated, "Julius Jones murdered Paul Howell in cold blood in front of his sister and daughters...No celebrity imploration or profusion of misinformation will change that."

In anticipation of the commutation hearing in the spring of 2020, Represent Justice helped formalize a campaign infrastructure with Cece Jones-Davis as Campaign Director, leading experts in Oklahoma and nationally in government

relations, public relations, faith engagement, and criminal justice reform, including formerly incarcerated people who themselves had innocence cases.

With a team in place, a landscape analysis was conducted to identify who were the key decision makers, likely timeline for a hearing, and how to best engage the public in Oklahoma and beyond. Jones-Davis had already started a Change.org petition on behalf of Julius which had tens of thousands of signatures and the support of some community members. However, the team believed it was essential to continue to build a larger coalition focused on:

- Faith leaders in and outside of Oklahoma
- Oklahoma's Republican and Democratic political leaders
- Celebrities with Oklahoma ties but with national or international reach

A robust and growing coalition was needed to garner support for Julius and his family, dispel myths about the case and Julius, and place sustained public pressure on the governor and the Pardon and Parole Board. The coalition also served as a large de facto speakers' bureau for a local and national press corps that was growing increasingly interested in the case.

The team was initially anticipating a campaign of just a few months. However, due to the pandemic, stalling tactics from District Attorney David Prater, and other delays related to legal appeals and maneuvers from both the state and Julius' defense team, the campaign persisted nearly two years.

In that time, the team rallied to grow the Change.org petition to over 6 million signatures, with huge growth after the murder of George Floyd and support of key influencers like Kim Kardashian. Additionally, Jones-Davis was able to grow grassroots support in Oklahoma spanning faith leaders, families, students, activists, artists and more to support the Julius Jones family and his right to a hearing that could free him and prevent an execution. On top of that, the Jones family and team continued to tell Julius' story in local and national media, to spread the word about his case for innocence and elevate

key supporters such as NFL Quarterback Baker Mayfield, NBA player Blake Griffin, (whose father coached Julius Jones in Oklahoma), rapper Vic Mensa (who included Julius Jones in a song), Pastor TD Jakes, and Kim Kardashian. This helped elevate the story to an international case focused both on the profound immorality of executing an innocent man as well as a larger conversation about inequities in the justice system.

The Julius Jones Coalition of grassroots advocates led by Jabee William, Jess Eddy, and Antoinette Jones in Oklahoma and beyond remained essential to the movement, with volunteers who flooded social media daily and helped make key connections with influencers. The Faith Committee – a subgroup of the coalition – was a working group of Oklahoma clergy who focused on faith engagement for the campaign.



In February 2021, the Justice for Julius campaign organized faith leaders and supporters to gather in Oklahoma City outside of the Pardon and Parole Board office to [hand over the over 6 million petition signatures](#) and tell Oklahoma leadership that Julius deserved to have a fair chance to tell his story, to have his sentence reconsidered, and to be reunited with his family after 20 plus years. The rally and show of international support for Julius set-off a series of key moments for the rest of the year.

## THE RESPONSE

On March 8, 2021, the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board voted to grant Jones a commutation hearing on June 8, 2021. This would be the first time in Oklahoma history that a person on death row would receive such a hearing. The board's vote sparked massive backlash from District Attorney David Prater and Attorney General Mike Hunter. In a statement to the press, Hunter said:

*“With the exception of Judge Allen McCall, I am disappointed in the members of the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board, The three members who voted in favor of moving Jones to stage two did not apply objective standards to the law or the evidence. I encourage those members to go back and look at the 33-page protest letter and 849-page appendix we submitted last Monday, which completely invalidates every claim that Julius Jones is innocent. My office will continue to stand on the irrefutable facts of this case and with the family of Paul Howell by opposing Jones’ request for relief from the Pardon and Parole Board.”*

Days later, D. A. Prater petitioned the Oklahoma Supreme Court in a lawsuit against Governor Stitt and parole board members Adam Luck and Kelly Doyle in an effort to stop Jones’ commutation hearing. Because of the uncertainty of that lawsuit at the time, Jones’ commutation hearing was rescheduled for September 13, 2021. The Oklahoma Supreme Court denied Prater’s request to disqualify Luck and Doyle from Jones’ long-awaited second stage commutation hearing.

Hunter resigned from office in May 2021 after reports surfaced of an extramarital affair, leading to Governor Kevin Stitt’s appointment of attorney John O’Connor as his replacement.

[Polling done in June of 2021 showed that 6 in 10 Oklahomans supported taking Julius Jones off of death row.](#)

In August of 2021 seven men, including Julius Jones, were thrown out of the lawsuit against the state of Oklahoma due to their botched executions. They were thrown out because they did not select an alternative to lethal injections for the execution, such as a firing squad.

*“To allow executions to proceed when there is a chance the court could find a constitutionally unacceptable risk that a person could suffer because of the drug combination used, is just plain wrong,” Dale Baich, one of Jones’ attorneys said.*

Just three weeks prior to Jones’ scheduled commutation hearing, new Attorney General John O’Connor requested execution dates for these seven men, with an October 28 execution date for Jones.

This began a robust international outcry against Oklahoma’s intention to kill Jones. In the weeks immediately following the announcement of the execution date, celebrities, grassroots advocates, organizations and more shared Julius’s story online, [in the capitol of Oklahoma](#), and in churches, homes, and on TV around the country resulting in hundreds of thousands of letters, calls and tweets to Oklahoma officials calling for Julius’ commutation.

A coordinated effort was made to show:

- That the state of Oklahoma could not execute an innocent man
- Julius was wrongfully convicted due to being with his family the night of the murder, poor council, and another man confessed to the crime.

After an unsuccessful effort by the district attorney and attorney general to remove Adam Luck and Kelly Doyle from the parole board, the board voted 3-1 to recommend a commutation of life with the possibility of parole to Governor Kevin Stitt on September 13, 2021. Hundreds of advocates, faith leaders and supporters rallied and held vigil outside of the meeting to witness the historical event that would be the first step in saving Jones’ life.

More than two weeks after the board’s vote, Governor Stitt declined their

recommendation, stating: *“Clemency hearings are more intensive and thorough than a commutation hearing and include the option for the inmate to speak publicly before the Pardon and Parole Board, as well as the victim’s family and attorneys from both sides, the precedent in Oklahoma is for death row inmates to receive the clemency hearings to which they are entitled prior to their execution date.”*

By state statute, Jones would receive a clemency hearing three weeks prior to his execution date. And, due to a miscalculation of Oklahoma’s execution schedule of six men on death row, Jones’ date was moved from October 28th to November 18th.

In the meantime, Jones was moved to “Death Watch” on October 15th – a 35-day period when a person facing execution is transferred to a cell block close to the execution chamber and monitored 24 hours a day, having all personal property removed.

The State’s clear intention to execute Jones led to intensified advocacy efforts on his behalf. The We the People Campaign – led by Dr. Tiffany Crutcher, Executive Director of the Terence Crutcher Foundation – worked to highlight D.A. Prater’s abuse of power and mobilized new energies to save Jones. We the People launched the Julius Jones Vigils in Tulsa and Oklahoma City, as well as nightly sleep-ins across from the Governor’s Mansion for several weeks.

Jones’ clemency hearing was held on November 1, 2021. Yet again, the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board voted 3-1 to recommend a commutation of life with the possibility of parole to Governor Stitt. Governor Stitt delayed making his decision until the final hours leading up to the scheduled execution.



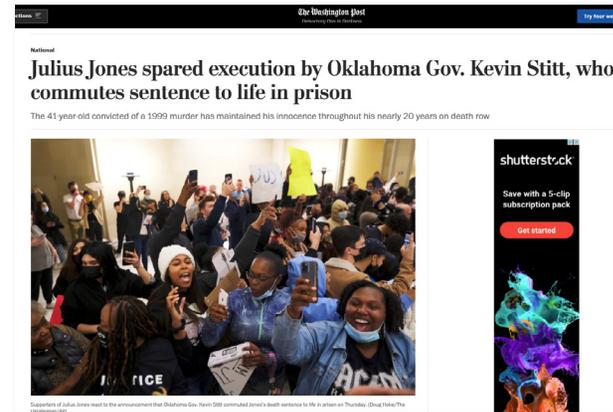
## NOVEMBER 18, 2021

The week leading up to the execution date was, by far, the most intense and emotional time for Jones, his family and his supporters. From November 15-18, hundreds of supporters held vigil in the Oklahoma State Capitol building, chanting, praying, singing, and urging Governor Stitt to accept the recommendation of the parole board. Madeline Jones attempted to meet with Governor Stitt and was declined. News outlets from across the country poured into Oklahoma City to capture the harrowing events leading up to execution day, which led to a worldwide effort to prevent Jones' execution during the final week. Notably, social media engagement skyrocketed with over 48,000 new Instagram followers and 1.5 billion overall social media reach during that time frame.



On November 18th, Jones and his attorneys were at McAlester State Penitentiary preparing for Jones' execution, with his family on the way to the prison. Supporters gathered outside McAlester and in the state capitol, with hundreds of Oklahoma City students walking out of school in protest.

Four hours before Jones was to be killed by lethal injection, Governor Kevin Stitt commuted Jones' sentence to life without the possibility of parole and issued an executive order denying Jones any further opportunity to petition the parole board.





## PART II. CAMPAIGN TACTICS AND ACTIVITIES: A DETAILED VIEW

### CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

Below reflects the key messages of the Justice for Julius campaign:

- Julius Jones is innocent. The evidence supports his innocence. No civilized state, country or community can execute someone under these circumstances.
  - **We know he is innocent because:**
    - § Christopher Jordan, the state's star witness who claims to have been a get-away-driver but not the trigger-man, has confessed multiple times to multiple people that he is the real murderer, and that he set Julius up to receive a reduced sentence. There are videos and sworn affidavits from multiple people, none of whom know each other, attesting to this fact.
    - § Julius has an alibi. He was home with his parents and sister when the murder occurred. His inexperienced and unprepared legal team failed to present that alibi at trial or to call either Julius or his family to the stand.
    - § Julius did not match the description of the killer. The only eyewitness described a man with one to two inches of hair. Julius had a shaved head. Christopher Jordan, however, had braids that met that description.
- Julius Jones' race matters, and how we treat this case says something about whether or not the state of Oklahoma cares about its Black residents.
  - The victim, Paul Howell, was a white man who was gunned down in a white neighborhood. Media coverage of the case, driven by District Attorney Bob "Cowboy" Macy immediately suggested gang

and drug related violence perpetrated by Black men. The racially hostile environment contributed to an unfair trial.

- Julius' arresting officer called him the n-word and dared him to run, suggesting he would shoot him if he did.
- A juror on Julius' case referred to him as the n-word and said they might as well take him behind the courthouse and shoot him. Eleven of the 12 jurors in his trial were white.
- One-third of Bob Macy's death penalty convictions, many of whom involved Black defendants, were thrown out for prosecutorial misconduct. Oklahoma has already exonerated ten individuals convicted of murder and sentenced to death.

The same forces of oppression that led to a racist trial and conviction are still at work. Today, District Attorney David Prater is doing everything in his power to cover up prosecutorial misconduct in his office, to harass and intimidate Pardon and Parole Board members and even the governor, all to silence Julius. The state of Oklahoma must reject the actions of a bully who is more concerned with executing an innocent Black man than hearing the truth.

- Julius must have a fair, impartial commutation hearing in front of the Pardon and Parole Board.
  - This is our chance to show the world that Oklahoma today is not the Oklahoma of 1921, when a white mob murdered hundreds of Black Tulsans, or even the Oklahoma of the 1990s, when Bob Macy was convicting and most likely executing innocent men.
  - Oklahomans like to talk about the "Oklahoma Standard" for compassion and empathy. Commuting the sentence of an innocent man who has already spent two decades in prison is our chance to show that standard is alive and well. Let Julius go home to his mother and father, whose son was cruelly taken from them more than 20 years ago.

## KEY CAMPAIGN SUCCESSES

- Saved the life of Julius Jones via a commutation.
- Achieved the first death row commutation hearing in Oklahoma history.
- Elevated, educated, and influenced local and national public about the story of Julius Jones, and injustices such as wrongful convictions and racial bias in the criminal legal system.
- Achieved bi-partisan support on racial justice and criminal justice issues, transcending traditional polarization.
- Achieved outcome oriented, effective integration of the collaboration between grassroots and grassroots networks, as well as public, private and national ally institutions.
- Organized alongside statewide groups including Oklahomans for Criminal Justice Reform, Oklahoma State NAACP, Oklahoma Black Legislative Caucus; ACLU of Oklahoma; Terence Crutcher Foundation; Oklahoma Catholic Conference; Oklahoma Conference of Churches; Oklahoma Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty; BLM OKC and others.
- Mobilized significant influencer support from public figures such as Kim Kardashian, Bryan Stevenson, Russell Westbrook, Trae Young, Blake Griffin, Baker Mayfield, Dak Prescott, Van Jones, and many more.
- Gained support from national organizations such as Witness to Innocence, Innocence Project, NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, American Conservative Union, Team Roc, and the Conservative Political Action Conference, Grassroots Law, LIVEFREE USA, Death Penalty Action, Until Freedom, and more.
- Worked with faith based organizations and leaders such as the Church of God in Christ, Bishop TD Jakes and Pastor John Gray, Pastor Mike McBride, Pastor Judah Smith, Jim Wallis, Pastor Freddy Hayne, Rev. Traci Blackmon, Bishop Vashtie McKenzie, and many more.
- Mitigated collateral harm through the direct support of impacted family members and concerned community.
- Achieved a sustainable and durable community-based coalition capable of building upon first-phase achievements, labor and political capital.
- Collected 6.5 million signatures on the Change.org petition – making it the most signed petition in 2021.
- Built the capacity of Antoinette and Madeline Jones to be able to represent the family and handle requests and by speaking to dozens of media outlets as well as engage in as many campaign activities as possible.

## DIGITAL MEDIA STATISTICS

Social media served as the engine of the Justice for Julius campaign. Because of the

### Instagram

- **98,489 followers**

### Twitter

- **11,240 followers**

### Facebook

- **17,908 followers**

### Social Media Monitoring

- Combined social media reach of #justiceforjulius, #justice4julius, #juliusjones - **2.84 billion**  
**over 1.5 billion reached in November**
- ORGANIC Total audience of @justiceforjulius : **37+ Million followers**
- **70% of influencer posts from direct outreach, 30% of posts from organic shares**

### Website

- **1,151,532 web visits in 2021**

### Actions

- **237,042 advocates took 528,036 actions** – emailing, calling or tweeting at some combination of Gov. Stitt’s office and the Pardon and Parole Board
  - Top States
    - **California - 35,201**
    - **New York - 21,001**
    - **Oklahoma - 17,673**



- **Texas - 16,047**
- **Florida - 10,872**

### • **510,065 emails**

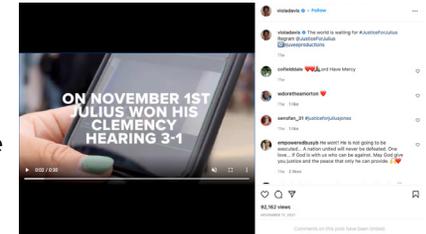
### • **17,844 tweets**

### • **1,127 phone calls**

- **36.6 Hours of phone calls**

### • **25,795 social shares**

### • **83,217 emails** from all over the world sent to either Gov/Board with Archdiocese’s tool



### • Change.org Petitions

- **6,580,772 signees**

- 95%+ of the growth happened in Dec. 2019 and April 2020.
- Dec 2019 was a “national Julius Jones petition day” with Change.org.
- April 2020 was Kim Kardashian activism anchored on social media and by an appearance on Jason Flom’s podcast.

### • Donations

- **4,189 donors**
- **\$201,444.30 dollars raised**

### • Ads (Targeted to Oklahoma-only)

- **2,320,775 impressions across facebook and programmatic**



## KEY CAMPAIGN MOMENTS

During the course of the Justice for Julius campaign, there were particular moments that required specialized activations, pivots and engagement. Below is a breakdown of those events:

ACTIVATIONS	DATES
New Year, New Justice 131-Mile Walk	December 30, 2020 – January 3, 2021
Faith Rally / Change.org Petition Delivery	February 2021
Commutation Weekend Events	September 10-12, 2021
Julius Jones Coalition Meet + Greet	September 11, 2021
Jesus x Justice x Julius Worship Service	September 12, 2021
Justice for Julius Commutation Rally / Vigil	September 13, 2021
Death Watch Prayer Vigils	October 1 - November 17, 2021
Justice for Julius Clemency Weekend	October 23-25, 2021 (postponed)
Justice for Julius Art Show	October 23, 2021
Jesus x Justice x Julius Worship Service II	October 24, 2021
Julius Jones Coalition Meet + Greet	October 25, 2021
Jesus x Justice x Julius Worship Clemency Hearing Rally / March	October 26, 2021 (postponed)
Clemency Hearing Rally / March	November 1, 2021
Oklahoma State Capitol Sit-in	November 15-18, 2021

## OTHER KEY CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

(BETWEEN MARCH 2020 – NOV 2021)

- Weekly Communications Meetings with campaign staff and volunteers
- Weekly Faith Committee Meetings with local clergy
- Weekly Justice for Julius Facebook Friday Live Events
- Mobilization of Key National Influencers Across Industries
- Justice for Julius Weekly National Prayer Calls
- Justice for Julius Faith Rally/Change.org Petition Delivery
- Justice for Julius Commutation Weekend
- National Faith Zoom Call w/Bishop TD Jakes
- National Faith Zoom Call w/Pastor John Gray
- National Faith Zoom Call w/ Rev. Freddy Haynes

## KEY PRESS COVERAGE

### [Washington Post](#)

*Who is Julius Jones? Death sentence for Oklahoma prisoner commuted hours before scheduled execution. | November 18, 2021*

- “Jones’s case attracted widespread attention. It has been highlighted by celebrities, citing racial bias and multiple inconsistencies in Jones’s trial, in a bid to convince Stitt of his innocence. Kardashian West, a reality TV star and prison reform advocate, championed his case. She visited him in prison in 2020 and called out the “cold machinery” of the death penalty in America on [Twitter](#) this week. Star [athletes](#), including NBA players Russell Westbrook, Blake Griffin and Trae Young, urged Stitt to spare Jones’s life. Some supporters [had ties to Jones](#) from his time as a youth football and basketball star.”

“Jones’s family unsuccessfully petitioned to meet with Stitt this week, while dozens of students at the University of Oklahoma [marched in protest](#) last week and called for the governor to grant

clemency. “Governor Stitt, please send my baby boy home,” Jones’s mother, Madeline Davis-Jones, said in a video message. “He is innocent, and please send him home. In Jesus’s name, I ask you.”

### [New York Times](#)

*On Death Row Half His Life, Oklahoma Man May be a Step Closer to Release* | September 16, 2021

- “A man on death row in Oklahoma could be one step closer to being released from prison after the state’s pardon and parole board recommended this week that his sentence be commuted, sending the case to the governor’s desk.”

*The man, Julius Jones, was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to death in 2002. He was accused of killing Paul Howell, who was in a car in the driveway of his parents’ home when he was carjacked and fatally shot in 1999.”*

### [NPR](#)

*Oklahoma Death Row Case Raises Questions About Evidence, Systemic Racism* | March 8, 2021

- “Julius Jones has spent the past 20 years behind bars for a killing he says he did not commit. An Oklahoma parole board is set to decide Monday whether he gets closer to possible release.”

### [Newsweek](#)

*Julius Jones in Race Against Time As Unrest Grows in Oklahoma Over Imminent Execution* | March 8, 2021

- “Julius Jones has hours to live unless Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt halts his execution. Jones, 41, is scheduled to receive the lethal injection at the state penitentiary in McAlester at 4 p.m. CT on Thursday.”

### [The Frontier](#)

*Julius Jones’ co-defendant admitted in prison to Paul Howell slaying, inmate says* | March 1, 2021

- “If this man is wrongfully executed, by continuing to conceal this information, I feel as if I would have had a hand in putting this man to death and I can’t live with that on my conscience,” Roderick Wesley wrote in a letter to Julius Jones’ attorneys.

### [The Oklahoman](#)

*Family, supporters of Julius Jones make final pleas ahead of Thursday execution* | November 17, 2021

- “As of late Wednesday afternoon, the governor had yet to say whether he would grant Jones clemency, as was recommended this month by a majority of the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board. But many of Jones’ supporters prayed for mercy at a Wednesday vigil outside the governor’s office.”

### [The Oklahoman](#)

*‘We will never give up that fight.’ Julius Jones is off death row, but will he ever be free?* | November 20, 2021

- “Julius Jones is off death row for a murder he says he didn’t commit but he may never go free.”

*‘We aren’t yet sure what our legal options are or what the path forward looks like, but we are still committed to bringing Julius home and we will never give up that fight,’ his sister, Antoinette Jones, said Friday on behalf of his family.”*

### [Black Wall Street Times](#)

*Parole Board members ask court to sanction AG O’Connor for trying to “delay and disrupt” proceedings.* | November 11 2021

- People around the nation watched for months as both Oklahoma County District Attorney David Prater and appointed Attorney General John O’Connor sued and attempted to *remove specific members who voted in favor of Julius Jones.*
- Adam Luck and Kelly Doyle, both appointed to the Board by Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt *in 2019*, are asking the Oklahoma

*Supreme Court to sanction AG O'Connor. Specifically, the request accuses the unelected official of trying to "delay and disrupt" the Board's proceedings. Additionally, it blasts AG O'Connor for making an untimely filing in that attempt.*

## **TESTIMONIALS ABOUT THE BROADER IMPLICATIONS FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM IN OKLAHOMA**

"There are many accomplishments of the Justice for Julius campaign, but mobilizing millions of people from across the ideological spectrum to care about one case is astounding. This was all done in a way that was true to the family and their voices being centered, as well as their messages, was powerful. In terms of the challenges ahead, it will be hard to sustain engagement when the avenues to bringing Julius home are limited and will take time.

One of the most valuable lessons from this campaign is that regular people can come together to create real power and influence. Narratives reinforced by racist systems can be overcome with new narratives. It is imperative to play a supportive role to local leadership and find ways to empower the people closest to the problem." – [Laura Porter, 8th Amendment Project](#)

The Justice for Julius campaign was successfully able to elevate Julius' story through grassroots organizing and community-building. 'Herding cats' was a monumental feat for this campaign, and the key challenge ahead will be sustaining the momentum and shifting focus to the death penalty and other criminal justice issues. The most powerful outcome of the campaign was bringing together people and groups with different political/ideological leanings to focus on a common goal. When people with diverse backgrounds talk and listen, instead of yelling and demonizing – good, positive things can be accomplished. The most needed next steps are to keep Julius in public view and organize high-powered legal representation. – [Attorney Dale Baich, Federal Public Defender](#)

Julius is still alive! Also, we have raised the public's awareness of the broken capital punishment system in Oklahoma, and we (perhaps) have helped to defeat HB 3903 (I hope!). The biggest campaign challenge was the uphill battle of confronting a version of Christianity that celebrates the death penalty and resents any challenge to that punitive mindset. We need more Christians to gather and communicate the contrary. In terms of next steps, we need legislation-minded, forward thinking people to help us generate and then push reform, for both short and long term change. – [Rev. Jon Middendorf](#)

The Justice for Julius campaign achieved numerous significant accomplishments. Namely, the campaign prevented the execution of Julius Jones. This is the pre-eminent accomplishment because preserving life is the highest calling of the Movement. However, secondary achievements will have and are having transformational impact in Oklahoma, positively impacting countless numbers of persons who are incarcerated in Oklahoma and are at-risk of incarceration. Because of the political triumph by the campaign over its deep opposition, which currently holds most State-wide elected positions in and enjoys broad support among the electorate, similarly situated persons, including all persons who possess a marginalized ethnicity/identity, entail an adverse socio-economic background, are of a youthful age at time of arrest, are on death row or sentenced to life imprisonment can now avail themselves of a well-established narrative of injustice that will be supportive. For example, death row inmate Richard Glossip now has enhanced capacity of defeating political opposition to Glossip advocacy efforts. Additionally, persons now at-risk of prosecution bearing any similarity to the story of Julius Jones can capitalize on the similarity(ies) to aid in the prevention of the injustice. Such cases beyond the prosecution stage are similarly benefited by the prevalence of the Julius Jones narrative. In Oklahoma, LWOP sentencing has been used widely and broadly over the past 30 to 40 years. As Julius has now been transitioned to LWOP status, the substantial attention will and is generating significant and unprecedented levels of attention, awareness, sympathy, and advocacy concerning the severity of an LWOP sentence. Addressing this reality will engender expansive engagement with an

abundance of ongoing injustice in the form past LWOP sentences and serve to be preventative of future excessive sentencing.

The campaign has also advanced death penalty abolition efforts in Oklahoma and nationally. In Oklahoma, a 60-40 Republican State, holding legislative supermajorities, the governor's, and attorney general's office, the success of the campaign to prohibit powerful State actors from effecting the desired political goal and government function, has now place the political viability of the death penalty as much more serious question Republican leadership must now evaluate.

Finally, the campaign has, by and through its success, established a viable socio-political avenue for redress of grave injustice in the criminal justice system in Oklahoma. Generations to come, who will likely find themselves in less adverse political circumstances than current conditions in Oklahoma, can now look to the work of this campaign as a blueprint for seeking relief from injustice when the criminal justice systems, its institutions, fail to respond adequately. – [Jess Eddy, Community Organizer](#)

Some of the campaign accomplishments include weekly faith prayer call (Prayers for Julius), connecting faith leaders to the Justice for Julius campaign and having them talk about it in church services, advocate on Julius's behalf, call governor and other OK elected officials, write letters on Julius's behalf. Another accomplishment was securing Bishop TD Jakes for a national faith call and letter to Gov. Stitt. The most significant challenge was getting evangelicals and conservatives to express public support for Julius Jones. One of our most valuable lessons has been the power of coalitions and interfaith/ecumenical efforts to present a moral argument to put pressure on elected officials, as well as the power of faith-led grassroots organizing and demonstrations to create a movement. – [Scott Buckout, Values Partnerships](#)



## PART III. LOOKING AHEAD

### NEXT STEPS: FREE JULIUS JONES

The coalition is currently organizing efforts for **#freejuliusjones** – the next advocacy phase in the fight to bring Jones home.

### JULIUS JONES INSTITUTE

Considering Governor Kevin Stitt’s executive order that denies Julius any further chances at freedom, his legal team is working to determine the constitutionality of that order and hopes to secure a new commutation hearing in three years.

In the meantime, the campaign is working to stabilize and sustain the advocacy work by establishing the Julius Jones Institute (JJI), a nonprofit that will use Julius’ story to do good work in Oklahoma around civic and youth engagement, and criminal justice reform.

Julius Jones Institute is a multi-racial, cross cultural, nonpartisan project committed to relational organizing and values-based practices. It will center one-to-one conversations, spiritual practices, cultural engagement, activism and faith-based organizing.

As **#justiceforjulius** enters Phase 2 efforts to **#FreeJuliusJones**, the campaign will leverage the extended and expansive networks of everyday people in Oklahoma to continue the work of advocating for Julius Jones, ending the death penalty, supporting a wide range of criminal justice reforms, and promoting civic engagement.

Continuing our theory of change forged through our Justice for Julius Campaign we will continue to:

**1. Listen:** It will continue conversation circles and pop-up events throughout Oklahoma to engage and listen to those directly impacted by the criminal justice system. Through our listening the Institute will uncover the overlapping impacts of mass incarceration and criminalization in Oklahoma, and fold these stories and individuals into the momentum of the Justice for Julius movement

**2. Educate:** Use forums, PSAs, key influencers, social media, and other methods to engage in conversations around how we make change in Oklahoma. Use our most recent victory with Julius Jones to introduce organizing and systems-change work to directly impacted communities and the allied institutions which have intersected during the Julius Jones movement.

**3. Amplify:** Utilize strategic communications, digital storytelling, and local influencers to build a clear and shared narrative around **#FreeJuliusJones**. The anchor programs are:

Civic Engagement / Voting / Democratic Participation

- Civic Engagement / Voting / Democratic Participation
- 2022 Governor Race/ Oklahoma County District Attorney Race
- Voter Registration
- Youth Engagement and Mentorship
- Criminal Justice reform in Oklahoma
- Quarterly bootcamps + Issue Based Public Actions



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