

July 14, 2020

The Honorable J. Kevin Stitt
Office of the Governor, State of Oklahoma
Oklahoma State Capitol
2300 Lincoln Blvd.
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105

The Honorable C. Allen McCall, J.D.
Mr. Larry Morris
Ms. Kelly Doyle
Mr. Adam Luck
Mr. Robert Gilliland, J.D.
Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board
2519 North Classen, Suite 405
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106

Dear Governor Stitt and honorable members of the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board,

I write to express my support for Oklahoma death row prisoner Julius Jones. I hope you will find the facts surrounding Julius and his subsequent trial reflect issues of racial bias that prevented Julius from receiving a fair trial.

For the past 21 years, Julius Jones has maintained his innocence in the tragic murder of Paul Howell. In reviewing the case, I am very concerned by several aspects of Julius' trial. I am especially concerned with the way racial discrimination affected his trial and the reliability of his conviction. Julius was a black defendant who was accused of murdering Paul Howell, a white victim. One of the jurors referred to Julius with a racial slur and stated, "they should take the n***** out and shoot him behind the jail." This juror's comments were made known to the judge by another juror, but the judge took no action nor did he disclose these remarks to Julius' attorney. This juror ultimately voted to convict and execute Julius Jones.

Additionally, in reviewing the testimony of key witnesses, major inconsistencies emerge in the accounts of the murder. Two of the key witnesses, who were implicated in the crime and did not testify for the murder or car robbery, were given deals on other charges in exchange for their testimony against Julius. In his original testimony, one of the witnesses admits to planting the murder weapon and handkerchief in Julius's bedroom.

Given the risk of false testimony, the evidence of racism, and the finality of a death sentence, I pray you will commute the sentence of Julius Jones. I do not believe justice has been served in this case, and it would be a tragedy for another innocent life to be lost due to a misapplication of justice.

Thank you for considering this request. I will be praying for you in the weeks and months ahead.

Blessings,

Jim Wallis
Founder and President of Sojourners

