

Lifelines

NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL COALITION TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY • NUMBER 102 • WINTER 2010

NCADP's Louisville Success Shows Abolition Movement Gaining Hearts, Minds and Momentum

NCADP's "Training for the Long Run: Building Bridges to Wider Audiences" conference in Louisville, Kentucky more than met expectations as the preeminent gathering of people from around the country who are committed to ending capital punishment in the U.S. and around the world. The excitement and energy at the conference was palpable as participants heard about cutting-edge policies that provide more security and safety from violent crime, and better ways of fulfilling the day-to-day needs of the survivors of homicide victims.

The presence of new allies, exemplifying the growing participation of individuals and organizations from various constituencies and viewpoints, was a key factor in the event's success. Political and religious conservatives joined a multitude of political and religious progressives. Law enforcement officials joined exonerated former death row prisoners. Families of death row prisoners joined family members of murder victims.

Celebrating the March 2009 victory of New Mexico abandoning its death penalty law – becoming the third state in as many years to do so – the conference centered around plenary sessions and panels highlighting new groups in the movement that are working with abolitionists around mutual concerns about capital punishment and practical alternatives to combating violent crime.



"The Lion of the Movement." Anthony Amsterdam accepts his Lifetime Achievement Award during the NCADP 2010 Awards Dinner.

The tone was set by a panel discussion on "The State of the Death Penalty," and an opening address by NCADP Executive Director

Continued on Page 8

Kansas Edges Closer to Abolition



KsCADP

The Kansas Coalition Against the Death Penalty

Though it ended in a 20-20 tie vote on February 19, 2010 in the state Senate, the Kansas measure to repeal its death penalty represented a political breakthrough. "Repeal legislation had always been stopped in committee, or through a parliamentary procedure," says Donna Schneweis, Coordinator for the Kansas Coalition Against the Death Penalty. "But this year, the majority Republican committee sent it to the Senate for a true vote."

Important signs say Kansas is ready to reconsider. Senate President, Republican Steve Morris, voted for repeal. Morris is one of the few legislators still in office who supported reinstating capital punishment in 1994. Recently, Morris told the *Kansas City Star*, "That's a vote I wish I could take back." Governor Mark Parkinson, who had also supported it, did not threaten an automatic veto, saying, "If it comes to my desk I will seriously study it."

"This is the beginning of the end of the Kansas death penalty," says Bill Lucero, a Kansan and long-time activist with Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation. "We had unprecedented religious support from eight Kansas-based Bishops, and the effort was led by four State Senators, three Republicans and a Democrat who would not fold under pressure." Both Schneweis and Lucero believe Kansas will soon repeal the death penalty because the recent debate did not center primarily on philosophical pros and cons, but on the reality of capital punishment. "After only about 25 capital trials, Kansas had prosecutorial and judicial misconduct, judicial error, inadequate representation, and another case that ended in a mistrial and withheld evidence," Schneweis observes. "With a track record that bad and with so few death penalty cases, people can see that it just doesn't work."



A Message from Diann Rust-Tierney

Dear Friends:

As I write this message for *Lifelines*, the last vestiges of Washington, D.C.'s "snowmageddon" are melting. For those of you who mock us for our lack of bravery when it comes to the cold white stuff—yes, it really was that bad.

In a city like Washington, D.C., where taking yourself and the role that you play in defining the course of human events too seriously is literally in the air, I always welcome the reminder that there is still much beyond our control. Whatever great things we might accomplish in our day jobs or our volunteer work, the most important thing is how we look after those closest to us: Our neighbors, our families, even ourselves.

I had a lot of time to think about our work. When I looked outside at the 20 inches of snow that hid my car, it was hard to imagine being able to drive it again. It was hard to imagine that I would feel dry pavement beneath my feet again. It reminded me of listening to family members of murder victims sharing how difficult it was to imagine a life after all that had happened.

I remembered talking to mothers with sons on death row. There was a life before the cold dead weight of the criminal justice system descended, but that life was too hard to remember or even imagine.

But while our hearts are struggling to see clearly, our heads know that the sun will finally come, long enough and strong enough to bring the thaw.

And so it is with our work. While we are winning this struggle, the day-to-day toll is great and each lost battle: each execution—each homicide—each unanswered need of a victim—leaves its mark.

That is when we must cling to the facts:

Fact: the chorus of opposition to capital punishment is growing in depth, breadth and intensity. NCADP's annual conference welcomed a bi-partisan, energetic constituency from all across the country representing people of all faith traditions, people of all races—conservatives and liberals, "pro-life" and "pro-choice", students, activists, lawyers and law professors, death row exonerees and murder victims' family members.

Fact: the third state in as many years has abandoned the death penalty, and almost a dozen states mounted serious efforts to repeal the death penalty—many stopping just short of winning—with steam enough left to finish the job.

The legal underpinnings of capital punishment continue to fall away—as the American Law Institute concludes that it can no longer recommend any model to assure that the death penalty will operate free of bias or error. Death penalty prosecutions and sentences continue their decline.

As winter draws to a close, gather yourself, prepare—the struggle is on and we will win.

NCADP is proud to be here with you to help every step of the way.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diann Rust-Tierney".

Diann

NCADP Lifelines

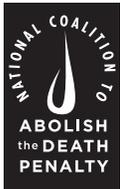
NCADP *Lifelines* is published quarterly by the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, the nation's oldest organization devoted exclusively to abolishing capital punishment. Founded in 1976, NCADP unifies a network of more than 100 Affiliate organizations, dedicated advocates and volunteers, and prominent national human and civil rights organizations in the fight to end the death penalty in the United States.

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Looking at What Works: The Boston Miracle

BY PAUL RUFFINS

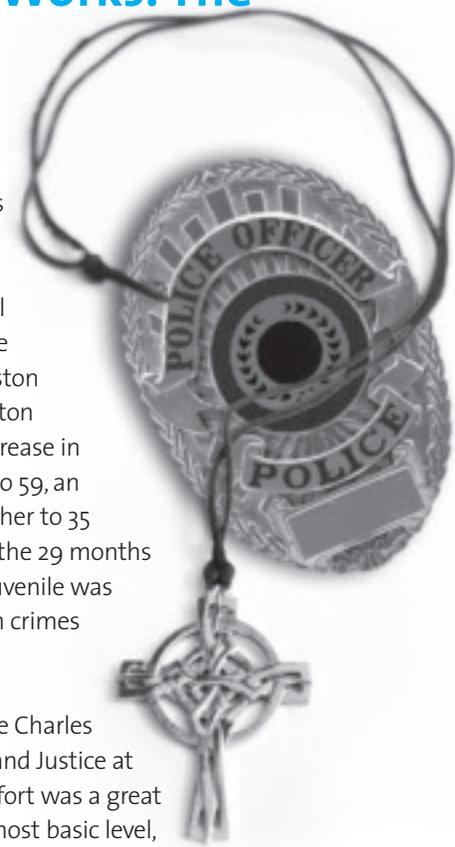
Activists, criminal justice and law enforcement communities seeking effective and cooperative strategies for reducing crime and violence that lead to capital punishment – a flawed and ineffective crime deterrent – often study the “Boston Miracle.” Between 1990 and 1996, Boston experienced the nation’s sharpest decrease in homicides. Killings dropped from 152 to 59, an amazing 67%. They declined even further to 35 in 1998. Perhaps most importantly, in the 29 months ending in January 1998, not a single juvenile was killed in the entire city, and overall gun crimes dropped 70%.

David Harris, Managing Director of the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice at Harvard Law School, declares, “That effort was a great model of success at the time. At the most basic level, it involved giving honest neighborhood residents, criminal suspects, and even gangbangers and the police department some real choices about their priorities and actions concerning public safety.”

The “Miracle” began when two important constituencies, the black religious community and the Boston Police Department (BPD), each experienced a crisis that forced them to seek new partnerships and solutions to the crack cocaine wars of the 1990s. The BPD had been rocked by incidents of racism and corruption that led to the resignation of the Police Chief. A group of black clergy formed the 10 Point Coalition* after the home of minister Eugene Rivers, a frequent critic of the police, was fired upon by drug dealers, and an incident when gangbangers brazenly attacked a packed church during a rival’s funeral.

The Coalition began a variety of activities including religious outreach, counseling, and using street workers to reach out to gang members and gather community-based information about potential violence. In June 1996, the Coalition and the BPD pioneered Operation Ceasefire, a tightly focused anti-gang tactic involving close coordination between ministers, police, parole officers and social workers. One key element of the Boston Miracle is that it placed a priority on getting guns out of the community, which diverged from the law enforcement strategy of the day in Boston and in most other communities, which focused on arrests and prosecutions for drug possession. The 10 Point Coalition arranged meetings where gangs tried to reach truces over past shootings and turf battles. The police used their discretion to strike an unofficial bargain not to pursue many small-time criminals on old charges as long as they stayed out of new trouble.

Continued on Page 11



Books From the Abolition Library



The Crying Tree
by Naseem Rakha
Broadway Books, New York, 2009
Reviewed by David McNeil

Former NPR correspondent Naseem Rakha had never thought much about state killing until she was assigned in 1996 to cover Oregon's first modern execution. Of her interviews with inmates, victim family members and corrections personnel, she writes: "I heard many stories, some of them abhorrent and some heartbreaking, but by far the most compelling were those told by the people who had come to terms with the murder of a loved one and no longer felt it necessary to seek retribution. This arc, from the most desperate kind of anguish to reconciliation and even love, stunned me and compelled me to write *The Crying Tree*."

The story opens with Irene and Nate Stanley's move with their two children from Illinois to the high desert of Oregon, followed by the murder of their son Shep a year later. The killer, Daniel Robbin, is quickly caught, tried and sentenced to death, and the Stanleys return to Illinois. The remainder of the book traces the effects of this crime and proposed punishment on Irene and Nate, on Shep's younger sister Bliss, on the warden of the Oregon State Penitentiary, Tab Mason, and on their relationships with one another during Robbin's nineteen years on death row.

Rakha artfully alternates between two sub-plots, one focusing on Irene's struggle to come to terms with her son's death and the devastation it causes her family, the other on Mason's attempts over a hurried four weeks to prepare himself, his staff and the condemned man for an execution. The plots converge in gripping fashion in Salem, Oregon, a few days before the deed is to be done. Rakha powerfully evokes how brutal violence permeates, alters and can overwhelm the lives and relationships of surviving family members as well as executioners.

The novel also portrays, however, the extraordinary capacity of human beings to heal the deepest anguish through courage, integrity and love. After nine years of being consumed by her desire for retribution, Irene discovers that her only options are forgiveness or death. Choosing the former, the road she takes to Salem (Shalom, or peace) is still a difficult, ten-year journey. The plot twists and the ending may or may not be predictable, but Irene's journey is inspiring and real. It is the source of the moral authority with which homicide survivors opposing the death penalty speak.

David McNeil is a member of Missourians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty.



The Ride: A Shocking Murder and a Bereaved Father's Journey from Rage to Redemption
By Brian MacQuarrie
DaCapo Books, Massachusetts, 2009
Reviewed by Paul Ruffins

The title of Boston Globe reporter Brian MacQuarrie's gripping true story could refer to many events: The last bike ride of 10-year-old Jeffrey Curley of Cambridge, Massachusetts, who innocently peddled over to meet two sexual predators; the car ride from which he would never return; or the years-long emotional roller-coaster that swept up Jeffrey's father, the book's main character. The crime catapulted Bob Curley, a divorced firefighter, into the center of the emotionally-charged legislative battle to reinstate Massachusetts' death penalty. In 1997, when Jeffrey was killed, Curley loudly supported the initiative which was defeated in a cliff-hanging tie vote. But after it was reintroduced in 1999, Curley came to actively oppose capital punishment.

Part of Curley's conversion came from experiencing the arbitrary nature of the criminal justice system. Curley watched the less-culpable defendant, who quickly admitted his role in the crime and helped police locate Jeffrey's body, be convicted of first degree murder. Jeffrey's actual killer was convicted of a lesser charge carrying the possibility of parole. Curley, a veteran, was also moved by the story of Manny Babbitt, a former Marine with schizophrenia who killed an elderly woman in California. The police promised that Manny's mental illness would mean confinement to a locked psychiatric facility. Instead, he was executed.

Ultimately, the biggest factor in Curley's change of heart was coming face to face with some murder victims' parents and relatives who opposed the death penalty – including Bud Welch, a member of NCADP's Board of Directors who lost his daughter in the 1995 Oklahoma City federal building bombing. Curley expected "left wing burnouts," but instead found "...regular guys, men who spoke straight from the heart and knew firsthand the horrible pain of murder."

Parts of "The Ride" are almost too painful to read, but the lesson is worth the journey: Contact changes more minds than confrontation.

One Christian's Perspective on the Death Penalty

BY REVEREND MATT RANDELES

In the Easter season, we remember Jesus' crucifixion and death for the sin of the world. Christians declare that Jesus' death brings life, so how can we then demand the death of certain criminals?

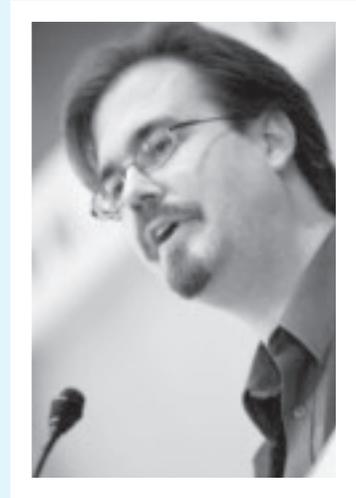
The Old Testament says, "You are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth." But developing a biblical understanding of capital punishment isn't as simple as appropriating select verses from the Old Testament. Are we prepared to execute those who curse their parents or worship other gods? These are also capital offenses in the Bible.

In light of the New Testament, we don't follow Old Testament regulations about such things as burnt offerings, building codes, or dietary laws. Jesus addressed "eye for an eye" and said, "Turn the other cheek." He talked about murder but focused on the root issue of anger. And when faced with an actual situation—a woman guilty of adultery—he called for the one without sin to cast the first stone.

A biblical understanding of capital punishment isn't a matter of assembling proof texts; it must be consistent with the gospel: that God redeems the worst people—and even calls them to do great things.

Consider the Apostle Paul: He originally persecuted Christians, overseeing the lynching of a Christian named Stephen. Consider Moses: before leading Israel out of slavery, he murdered an Egyptian. Consider King David: he seduced a woman and engineered her husband's death. Yet, he is called a man after God's own heart!

These stories aren't incidental; they're at the core of the Christian faith. Central to Christianity is the principle that those who have received mercy are to be merciful, renouncing retribution.



Now, this doesn't mean that we abandon the rule of law. But perfect justice will only come from God; ours will always be tainted by mistakes, bias, and injustice. We cannot administer perfect justice; we must therefore not use irreversible methods.

Is fighting the death penalty worthwhile? Aren't there more important priorities; poverty, homelessness, world hunger? But think about who Jesus stood up for: The guilty, the prostitutes, the sinners. Whom did he criticize? The self-righteous, the judgmental, those interested in maintaining the status quo. So, in speaking up for those that society disdains and against a corrupt system, we are speaking the language of Jesus. Jesus' own death was unjust; Christians, then, of all people, should oppose a system that is impossibly flawed.

Reverend Randles is the Pastor of Headwaters Covenant Church in Helena, Montana. This article is a version of his address delivered at the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty January 2010 national conference in Louisville, Kentucky.

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HIGHLIGHTS OF NCADP 2010: *Building Bridges*

◀ “We who believe in freedom will not rest until it comes.” Phyllis Prentice, wife of death row exoneree Shujaa Graham, opens the conference with “Ella’s Song” by African American cultural activist Bernice Johnson Reagon.

▼ Ray Krone, Witness to Innocence Director of Communications and Training, describes his experience as a death row exoneree.

▼ Ronald E. Hampton (center), Executive Director, National Black Police Association, Inc., said the law enforcement community feels the death penalty is the least effective crime prevention tool. Also participating in the “Getting Smarter on Crime” panel were (left) Dr. Allen Ault, Dean of the College of Justice and Safety, Eastern Kentucky University, and (right) Dick Dieter, Executive Director, Death Penalty Information Center.

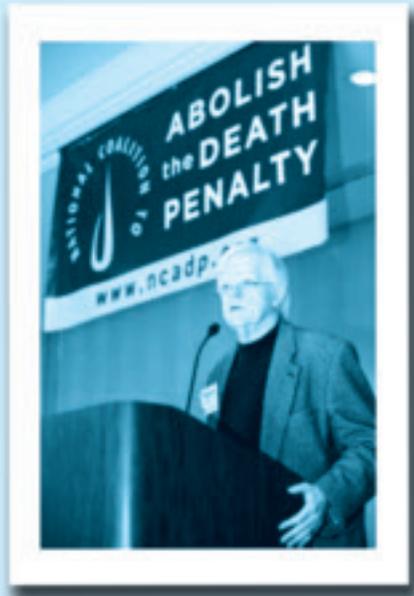
► Eric Dodge helps a conference participant with an action project at the Abolition Action Center, a new feature at the event.

► Sister Helen Prejean urges NCADP conferees to build bridges to wider audiences during her keynote speech.

to Wider Audiences



► Patrick Delahanty, Chair of the Kentucky Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, welcomes NCADP conferees.



◄ Participants on a panel entitled “Conservative Voices Opposing the Death Penalty” listen to a question from the audience. From left: Matt Randles, Pastor, Headwaters Covenant Church, Helena, Montana; Montana State Senator Roy Brown; Barry W. Lynn, Executive Director, Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

▼ Stephen B. Bright, President and Senior Counsel, Southern Center for Human Rights, presenting Edward J. Monahan (left) and Daniel T. Goyette (center) of the Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy with the NCADP 2010 Outstanding Legal Service Award.



▲ Magdaleno Leno Rose-Avila (far left) and New Mexico State Representative Gail Chasey (fifth from left) congratulate the New Mexico Coalition to Repeal the Death Penalty on receiving the NCADP 2010 Lighting the Torch of Conscience Award. Second from left: Patrick Tyrrell, Cathy Ansheles, Coalition Executive Director Viki Elkey, NCADP Board of Directors member Juan Melendez, and Judi Caruso.



▲ NCADP Board of Directors Chair F. Richard Curtner presents New Mexico State Representative Gail Chasey with the NCADP 2010 Abolitionist of the Year Award. New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson was also a 2010 Abolitionist of the Year awardee.



◄ Sister Helen Prejean (center) and Magdaleno Leno Rose-Avila, Executive Director, Social Justice Fund Northwest, congratulate singer-songwriter Steve Earle (left) on NCADP’s first-ever Shining Star of Abolition Award.

Diann Rust-Tierney. In the address, Rust-Tierney urged conferees to continue strengthening and broadening the abolition movement by building common ground across diverse political parties, racial backgrounds and faith communities. Abolitionists, she said, must become part of the overall criminal justice solution that addresses societal and crime victims' families' needs.

"We are growing," said Rust-Tierney. "Where once most of us were drawn to this work because we could not countenance the spectacle of the government strapping any human being into an electric chair, gas chamber or on a gurney, we have opened our arms wider and broadened our reach to embrace surviving families of murdered loved ones."

Rust-Tierney continued, "Our recognition of the humanity of the perpetrator includes an understanding that such recognition demands accountability. And with equal concern we recognize and abhor the dehumanization of the person who was lost to murder. These are values that we have always held – sometimes obscured in the day-to-day press of the struggle, the heat of battle and the jargon of the work. We know now the importance of doing a better job of articulating and demonstrating these principles that lie deep within our hearts."

CONSERVATIVES AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

Barry Lynn, the Executive Director of Americans for Separation of Church and State, moderated a panel featuring a video clip of Jay Alan Sekulow, Chief Counsel of the American Center for Law and Justice, who discussed his personal objections to capital punishment. Titled "Conservative Voices Opposing the Death Penalty," the panel focused on the increasing number of Republicans and others whose opposition to capital punishment stems from their conservative principles. Speakers included Montana State Senator Roy Brown, a former Republican nominee for governor; Reverend Matt Randles (see Reverend Randles' article on page five) of Headwaters Covenant Church in Helena, Montana; and Heather Hass, a former staffer for the National Republican Congressional Committee.

"We are building a big tent, with sturdy stakes of opposition to government institutions in the business of killing as part of our criminal justice policy," said Rust-Tierney.

POLICE AND CORRECTIONS OFFICERS

Conferees heard about law enforcement efforts to keep communities safer and hold offenders accountable, and ways in which the abolition movement and the criminal justice community could more effectively work together on these issues. For example, during the "Reaching Out to Law Enforcement" panel, speakers encouraged abolitionists to learn about and understand police culture and work with them on the goals they share in common, such as



NCADP Director of Affiliate Support Abe Bonowitz (far right) and other participants join hands and sing during the interfaith service that concluded the 2010 NCADP conference in Louisville, Kentucky.

protecting communities from violent offenders. Panelists included former police officer Redditt Hudson, a Program Associate at the ACLU of Eastern Missouri; Dr. George Kain, a police commissioner in Ridgefield, Connecticut and a Board member of the Connecticut Network to Abolish the Death Penalty; Laura Porter, Director of Organizing for Equal Justice USA; and Denver Schimming, an Organizer with Tennesseans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty.

FAMILY MEMBERS OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS

Surviving parents, spouses, children, siblings and relatives of murder victims have a stake in the death penalty debate, and are providing leadership on the issue. The 2010 conference drew more of these survivors than ever before. A special reception sponsored by Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation (MVFR) and Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights (MVFHR) was held during the conference to honor their commitment to ending capital punishment. Additionally, during the plenary session "Innovative and Effective Responses to Crime and Violence," Susan Herman, former Executive Director of the National Center for Victims of Crime, discussed the failures of the current criminal justice system in responding to the needs of violence victims and their families.



Reverend Lennox Yearwood (left) of the Hip Hop Caucus which encourages urban youth to become activists, greets Troy Davis' sister Martina Correia after speaking in the plenary session "People Affected by the Criminal Justice System."

EXPERIENCE, INSPIRATION AND ACTIVISM

Participants at the conference were emotionally moved by several conference events. A passionate address by Rev. Lennox Yearwood, President and CEO of the Hip Hop Caucus, about the abolition movement building bridges to urban youth brought the audience to its feet. Keynote speaker Sister Helen Prejean, known internationally for her

advocacy and pastoral work with death row prisoners and violence victims, further energized participants. Several "Voices of Experience," including well-known activists Bud Welch, Henderson Hill, Vicki Schieber and Martina Correia, put a human face on the death penalty issue.

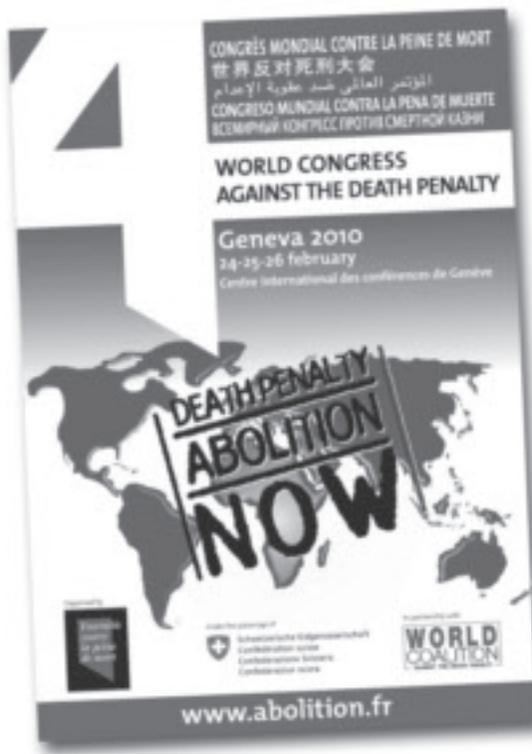
The conference marked the addition of a new feature, the "Abolition Action Center" where participants could transform what

Abolition on Global Stage at Fourth World Congress Against the Death Penalty

Abolitionists, human rights activists, death row exonerees, attorneys, murder victims' family members, students and NGOs (non-government organizations) gathered in Geneva, Switzerland this winter for the Fourth World Congress against the Death Penalty. The Congress, held from February 24-February 26, 2010 in the city's International Conference Center, was organized by the French organization Ensemble Contre la Peine de Mort under the patronage of the Swiss Confederation and in partnership with the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty.

The Congresses bring individuals and organizations together to devise strategies for ending capital punishment around the world. This year the focus was on participants from retentionist nations, with a special appeal to them to work to rid their respective countries of the punishment.

Anti-death penalty activists from several countries participated as keynote speakers or panelists, including Sister Helen Prejean, author of the book "Dead Man Walking." New Mexico State Representative Gail Chasey, who authored her state's repeal bill, also attended.



Because the gathering was in Geneva, a city known for championing human rights internationally, the event also focused on the international diplomatic community, especially participants in the session of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

The Fourth World Congress concluded with a Final Declaration addressed to the world, which reads in part:

"We reconfirm that the death penalty may in no circumstances be regarded as an appropriate response to the violence and tensions which permeate through our societies, taking into account the emotional burden they create, particularly in the context of terrorism,

"We call, from the host city of international organizations and a symbol of peace:

- *The de facto abolitionist states to enact legislation abolishing the death penalty in law;*
- *The abolitionist states to integrate the issue of universal abolition in their international relations by making it a major focus of their international policy of promoting human rights;*
- *The international and regional organizations, to support the universal abolition of the death penalty including the adoption of resolutions calling for a moratorium on executions, by supporting educational activities, and increased cooperation with abolitionist NGOs that act locally;*
- *Abolitionist organizations and actors from retentionist states to unite their strength and determination in creating and developing national and regional coalitions, with the aim to promote locally, the universal abolition of capital punishment."*

Cover Story From Page 8

they had learned at the conference into specific actions such as making "Shouting from the Rooftops" videos (see <http://www.shoutingfromtherooftops.org>), writing letters to editors of newspapers, and submitting formal comments to legislative committees and state corrections agencies.

NCADP AWARDS DINNER

The capstone of the conference opened with the stirring drumbeats of the River City Drum Corp, a Kentucky youth marching band trained in African drumming techniques and materials. The audience rose repeatedly in enthusiastic standing ovations to honor Lifetime Achievement Award winner Anthony Amsterdam, a New York University School of Law professor who is considered the movement "Lion" for his years of successful legal attacks on capital punishment; New Mexico State Rep. Gail Chasey, who, along with Governor Bill Richardson, won the Abolitionist of the Year Award for

the passage and enactment of New Mexico's repeal law; the New Mexico Coalition to Repeal the Death Penalty, the winner of the Lighting the Torch of Conscience Award for its years of hard work leading to repeal; the Kentucky Department of Public Advocacy, the winner of the Outstanding Legal Service Award, for exemplary and dedicated representation of indigent clients; and singer-songwriter Steve Earle, winner of the first-ever Shining Star of Abolition Award, for his lifelong commitment to communicating the injustice of the death penalty through his art.

IN THE SPIRIT

The conference closed with the "Praise and Healing Ceremony: An Interfaith Celebration." The multi-media spiritual gathering featured music, dance, art and prayer designed to form a healing vision uniting everyone in the common effort to end capital punishment.

Q & A With Barbara Arnwine

Barbara Arnwine is a new member of the NCADP Board of Directors. Arnwine, who is the Executive Director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, is internationally renowned for contributions on critical justice issues including the passage of the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1991. A graduate of Scripps College and Duke University School of Law, she continues to champion civil rights issues nationally and internationally in the areas of housing, fair lending, community development, employment voting, education and environmental justice. A prominent leader in the civil rights community, Arnwine also continues to fight for the preservation of affirmative action and diversity programs.



Q: What drives your involvement with NCADP?

A: It grows out of my evolution as a civil rights lawyer. I saw a lot of violence growing up in South Central L.A., where black life just seemed to be devalued. I started asking questions about race, income and privilege in the criminal justice system when I was a teenager and saw people who had killed black folks get back out of jail in three years. Later, I went to law school and became obsessed with the issue of prosecutorial discretion.

Q: Is there anyone who inspired you?

A: Myrlie Evers, she taught at Scripps College. Even though her husband (Mississippi civil rights activist Medgar Evers) was murdered in front of her home, she remained a sweet and loving person. Decades later when the murderer was finally prosecuted, she opposed killing him.

Q: Did you have a specific "Ah ha" moment?

A: In the mid-eighties the issue literally came to my doorstep. My brother was shot and killed when he was mistaken for another guy. Some people in my family said, "This is not a matter of politics, or the racism of the criminal justice system, we want revenge." Somehow, the desire for vengeance became the measure of how much we loved my brother. I had to step in and say, "Sure we loved him, but what justice is being served by putting another person into the ground?" Debating my own family showed me just how opposed I was on strictly moral grounds.

Q: How has being a family member of a murder victim impacted your work?

A: Well, the first thing a lot of pro-death penalty people say is, "Well you'd support capital punishment if someone in your family was murdered." When they find out about my brother, it freaks them out. They can't imagine that a tragedy like that might make you treasure life even more.

Sachin Chheda Becomes NCADP's Deputy Director

NCADP was happy to announce at this year's Annual Conference that **Sachin Chheda** has come on board as its new Deputy Director, overseeing field, political, communications and outreach efforts. A life-long opponent of capital punishment, Chheda came actively to the abolition movement when he was hired to lead the "No Death Penalty Wisconsin" campaign in 2006, working to defeat the return of the death penalty in Wisconsin after more than 150 years.



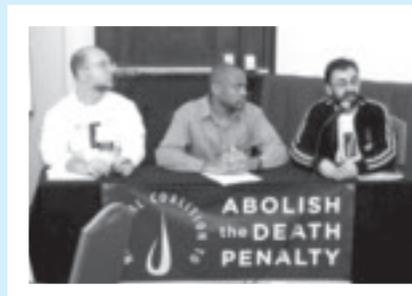
"NCADP is focused on what matters most – building a grassroots constituency for policy change."

"I'm excited to be working with NCADP full-time," says Chheda. "Our movement has tremendous momentum, and we are building a great team to work state-by-state through NCADP, our Affiliates, and our many partners across the nation."

Chheda has been a consultant to NCADP, working to help state campaigns and to build NCADP's online presence. In more than 17 years as a nonprofit, advocacy, campaign and government relations professional, he has worked as a senior aide to Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle, organized parents of lead-poisoned children, managed candidates for federal, state and local office, and assisted labor unions and nonprofit advocacy groups in reaching their political goals.

"NCADP is focused on what matters most – building a grassroots constituency for policy change," says Chheda. "I think we will see the end of the death penalty in the U.S. in my lifetime."

Chheda lives in Milwaukee with his wife Angela McManaman, an editor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and their three children.



NCADP Deputy Director Sachin Chheda (right) answers a question during a conference workshop on diversity and abolition campaigns, as Abe Bonowitz (left) NCADP Director of Affiliate Support, and Reginald Shuford (center), Senior Staff Council in the ACLU Foundation's Racial Justice Program, listen.

Celebrating the Heroes and Sheroes

BY MAGDALENO LENO ROSE-AVILA

I must tell you that it was humbling for me to be at the (2010) Conference of the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty. Every place I looked there were men and women who are doing incredible work to protect the lives of others and make our society better. These people help us all to heal.



We have been led to believe that the only heroes are those that wear uniforms when in fact some of the REAL HEROES are folks who have never worn a uniform but who perform miracles and risk everything more than once. Some day a President when giving the State of the Union Address will have an Abolitionist, Peace Activist, Feminist, Environmentalist, Immigrant Rights Activist, LGBTQ Spokesperson sitting with the First Lady and the President will recognize these heroes as being an important part of the fabric of America.

At the NCADP Conference there were exonorees, murder victims' families, and the families of death row inmates, lawyers, paralegals, religious folks, atheists, organizers, and many more. They came in all shapes, sizes, ages, from all over the country and some from other countries. They were common people who do incredible uncommon acts of humanity.

I got to MC the awards dinner where we heard from the voices of New Mexico and their victory, we got to hear lawyers like Steve Bright, Tony Amsterdam and others, we got to hear Sister Helen as she recognized singer Steve Earle who moved our minds and hearts with his music...As I looked around the hall and saw so many great individuals, I had to remind myself that there were in fact thousands of others across this country who were also working hard to make our society more civil and just...and for some reason could

not be in the room with us that night.

I am blessed to be part of such a wonderful movement that makes us all better because we give of ourselves ...

So to all the Heroes and Sheroes I want to let you know that we celebrate your lives and dreams ...thank you for all you do and dream.

Boston Miracle *From Page 3*

The peace was enforced through both "carrots" and "sticks." In return for putting down their weapons, gangs, criminals and addicts were offered the "carrots" of city services such as drug treatment, job training, GED tutoring, employment, and health care. The "sticks" included a program called "Pulling Levers." If gangs or individuals persisted in violence, the ministers threatened to "drop a dime" and contact police, helping them leverage all available criminal and civil sanctions. These ranged from zero tolerance of bail and parole violations, to arrests for delinquent child support payments, or towing cars for unpaid parking tickets.

This approach was controversial. Many police officers strongly resented the idea of any negotiations with criminals. Some civil liberties groups were troubled about targeting entire gangs for the actions of a few individuals, or using civil regulations and penalties as tools in criminal cases. Nevertheless, there was a dramatic decrease in neighborhood violence, which was also accompanied by a drop in juvenile arrests and convictions, and ultimately fewer complaints against the police.

The Boston Miracle has been subjected to extensive academic research. Anthony Braga of the Kennedy School of Government, examined the killings of people 14 to 24 years old, the exact group

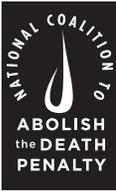
targeted by Operation Ceasefire. He concluded that just weeks after it was instituted, there was a 63% reduction in Boston's monthly youth homicide rate, which no other city in the country could match.

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Some criminologists have questioned how much of the Boston experience can be replicated elsewhere. For example, Harvard researcher Christopher Winship believes that the ministers' greatest impact wasn't their religious outreach or social programs, which were fairly small in scope, but in serving as trusted intermediaries who could help align the safety concerns of black and Latino communities, with the financial and human resources of the city and the police.

But Professor Harris of the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute believes that such partnership models can be used in other cities. "One problem with the Boston Miracle," he said, "is the very name itself, which makes it seem like an act of God. This obscures all the risks and very hard work that went into building the relationships that made it possible."

*To read the Coalition's 10 Point Plan visit [http:// www.bostontenpoint.org/tenpointplan.html](http://www.bostontenpoint.org/tenpointplan.html)



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Onward to Abolition!

The energetic marching rhythms of Louisville's River City Drum Corp opened the NCADP 2010 Awards Dinner.

Lifelines

Keeping Up Between the Lifelines

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