

DEATH PENALTY ACTION

MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

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51st Anniversary of Furman v. Georgia Comes As U.S. Supreme Court Disregards Innocence as “Relevant.”

BREAKING: Brother of Texas Prisoner Rodney Reed to Speak at 11am EDT

**Anti-Death Penalty Vigil Continues at the U.S. Supreme Court for its 30th Year:
Saying NO to electrocutions, gas chambers, firing squads and lethal injections**

WHO: BREAKING NEWS: **Rodrirk Reed**, brother of Texas death row prisoner Rodney Reed and spokesman for the Reed family, will address the [Texas Court of Criminal Appeals ruling yesterday](#) denying relief to his brother Rodney Reed, a demonstrably innocent man on Texas death row. This will take place at 11am EDT today, June 29, 2023 and will be livestreamed on Death Penalty Action’s [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Youtube](#) platforms.

Also attending:

Chuck Culhane, whose life was spared 51 years ago by the *Furman v. Georgia* decision,

Congressman Glenn Ivey MD-4 (speaking at 6pm June 29)

Rev. Sharon Risher, whose mother and two cousins were killed in the Charleston church shooting, noted death penalty expert

Robert Dunham, former executive director of the Death Penalty Information Center

Randy Gardner, brother of the last man executed in the US by firing squad **Charles Keith** and **Rodrirk Reed**, brothers of high-profile innocent prisoners awaiting exoneration, Ohio's Kevin Keith and Texas's Rodney Reed,

Rev. Dr. Jeff Hood, a spiritual advisor who has accompanied two prisoners to their executions so far this year, and many more, including exonerated death row prisoners, murder victim family members, dozens of anti-death penalty activists from at least 20 states around the country, clergy, scholars and leaders of state and national anti-death penalty and aligned organizations. Convened by the Abolitionist Action Committee, a project of DeathPenaltyAction.org. All activities take place on the sidewalk in front of the US Supreme Court.

WHAT: An extensive speaker program, public vigil, and four day liquid-only fast to mark the anniversaries of the historic June 29, 1972 Furman and July 2, 1976 Gregg Supreme Court decisions on the death penalty. **This highly visual symbolic protest event draws death penalty opponents from across the country and from other countries.**

WHEN: Daily vigils from June 29 to July 2 starting at 9am. A press conference featuring Rodrick Reed, brother of Rodney Reed, will take place at 11am on June 29, and Chuck Culhane, whose life was spared 50 years ago by the Furman v. Georgia decision. Speakers with “voices of experience on the death penalty” will make presentations starting at 6:00 pm each day (June 29 to July 2), with on-line panels via Zoom throughout each day.

WHERE: On the sidewalk/street in front of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, DC & Zoom.

[See a brief video](#) of former death row prisoner Chuck Culhane recalling the moment he learned he would not be killed. Culhane is available for in-person interviews on-site at the US Supreme Court.

Event background:

This year, June 29, 2023 marks the 51st anniversary of the Furman v. Georgia decision in which the U.S. Supreme Court invalidated all death penalty laws in the United States, finding capital punishment to be applied in an arbitrary and capricious manner. July 2nd marks the 47th anniversary of the 1976 Gregg decision, which upheld new state death penalty laws and allowed the resumption of executions.

This is the 30th consecutive year that the Abolitionist Action Committee will hold its annual Fast and Vigil between the dates of these two landmark decisions. Activists, many of whom are fasting the entire four days, are traveling to Washington D.C. from at least 20 states across the United States and beyond.

Please note that due to the pandemic, the vigil was almost entirely virtual in 2020, and in 2021 we added a limited physical presence on the sidewalk in front of the US Supreme Court. Speakers and others are available by zoom and telephone. To arrange interviews, Please contact Blair FitzGibbon - blair@blairfitzgibbon.com 202-503-6141 or Abraham Bonowitz – bonowitz@gmail.com – 561-371-5204.

The Abolitionist Action Committee is an ad-hoc group of individuals committed to highly visible and effective public education for alternatives to the death penalty through nonviolent direct action. Coordination for this event is provided by DeathPenaltyAction.org.

Information online at www.abolition.org, or call 800-973-6548.

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