



For Immediate Release

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Innocence Project of Florida Urges Clemency for the Florida Five
*Continuing Spread of COVID-19 Demands Release of Five Wrongfully Convicted
Individuals*

Tallahassee, FL (August 10, 2020) – In July 2020, the Innocence Project of Florida filed Applications for Clemency for five innocent clients, known as the Florida Five:

- **Amanda Brumfield** was convicted of a 2008 Orange County manslaughter for the death of a child in her care, where the medical and scientific evidence demonstrates that while the death of this child was tragic, a crime did not occur at all. She has served more than 8 years of a 20-year sentence for a crime she did not commit;
- **Dustin Duty** was sentenced to 20 years for a 2013 Duval County armed robbery of a woman who was unduly persuaded to identify him as the perpetrator, and now she believes she misidentified Mr. Duty. This conviction happened even though Mr. Duty's boss provided an alibi that he was at work during the time of the robbery. Mr. Duty has served more than 6 years of a 20 year sentence wrongfully incarcerated;
- **Thomas Gilbert** was convicted for the 1973 Dade County murder of a tourist. Despite a 1977 reinvestigation by the Miami-Dade Police Department that confirmed another individual's confession to the crime, he has remained wrongfully incarcerated for more than 46 years of a life sentence;
- **Leo Schofield** was convicted for the 1987 Polk County murder of his wife, despite the detailed confession of another individual, himself a convicted murderer, who said that he committed the murder. That individual's confession is corroborated by the presence of his fingerprints in the victim's abandoned vehicle. Mr. Schofield has served more than 33 years of a life sentence wrongfully incarcerated;
- **Randy Seal** was convicted of a 2004 Putnam County murder of his girlfriend when she died in a fire that state investigators said was intentionally set. There is no evidence that the fire was intentionally set, and in fact, the State's experts now agree with that assessment. He has served more than 16 years of a life sentence for a fire that was not intentionally set.

While the Innocence Project of Florida represents dozens of individuals wrongfully convicted throughout Florida, the Florida Five all have significant evidence of their factual innocence, have

completed substantial litigation, and have had their efforts to find vindication in the courts slowed and frustrated by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Florida has become the epicenter of the COVID-19 epidemic, with the virus impacting not only the general population but spreading more aggressively in jails and prisons. All of the Florida Five are faced with increased susceptibility to contracting COVID-19 due to their present carceral situation. For Leo Schofield, who is 54-years-old, and particularly for Thomas Gilbert, who is 67-years-old, contracting the virus could make them particularly vulnerable to great sickness or death. The Innocence Project of Florida is urging the members of the Florida Cabinet to rely on the significant evidence of innocence to set these cases for their September 23, 2020 hearing, pardon the Florida Five or, at minimum, commute their sentences. Commutation would allow for the Florida Five to safely self-isolate and protect themselves from the serious and sometimes deadly impact of COVID-19, while continuing to seek vindication.

IPF Staff Attorney Krista Dolan and attorney for the Florida Five said, “The cases of the Florida Five are different in many ways, but are the same in one significant way—evidence demonstrates that they are innocent. We urge the Board of Executive Clemency to review these cases, set them for their September hearing, and rely on the substantial evidence of innocence as a basis to rectify their wrongful convictions by granting them each a pardon.”

IPF Executive Director Seth Miller and attorney for the Florida Five said, “COVID-19 has ravaged jails and prison facilities throughout Florida and the nation, even infecting the top administrator of Florida’s Department of Corrections. The Florida Five are now at substantial risk of contracting a deadly virus that has also ground their efforts to achieve vindication in the courts to a halt. All of the Florida Five have served substantial time in prison, and allowing them to reach the safety of home while keeping them healthy and alive to continue to seek full vindication is a just outcome. We urge the Board of Executive Clemency to at least commute the sentences of each of the Florida Five to time-served.”

Comprehensive information about each of the Florida Five, including their individual filed applications for Executive Clemency, can be found on the Innocence Project of Florida website at www.floridainnocence.org/clemency.

The Innocence Project of Florida (IPF) represents each of the Florida Five. Since 2003, IPF has assisted in the release from wrongful incarceration of 23 innocent individuals who have collectively served more than 495 years for the crimes they did not commit. Located in Tallahassee, IPF’s mission is to find and free the innocent in Florida prisons, help these individuals transition back into a changed society, and work to reform the criminal justice system. For more information, visit www.FloridaInnocence.org.

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