

Statement from Attorneys for Terry Williams in Response to the Stay of Execution and
Vacation of Death Sentence

“On behalf of Terry Williams, we are extremely pleased that Judge Sarmina, after carefully considering all of the evidence in this case, has vacated the death sentence based on misconduct by the prosecution. Her decision was right and well-reasoned. As prosecutor for more than 10 years and a judge who likely presided over more than a hundred homicide trials, Judge Sarmina certainly understands how the prosecution misled the jury in this case. The Philadelphia District Attorney should stop their appeals and stop fighting to have Terry executed.

The District Attorney’s very own files were replete with evidence from as early as 1984 of predatory, exploitive and abusive acts by Herbert Hamilton and Amos Norwood against Terry Williams and other teenage boys. It is legally and ethically unconscionable that Seth Williams and his Assistants have been advocating for the execution of Terry Williams after hiding critical evidence from jurors and continuing to hide it for 28 years.

Judge Sarmina found that the trial prosecutor engaged in misconduct. She found that the prosecutor ‘played games and took unfair measures to win.’ She also noted that the prosecutor violated her ethical duty for failing to turn over evidence in the files in the possession of the Commonwealth

If the DA appeals, we are confident that the Pennsylvania Supreme Court will not overturn Judge Sarmina’s well-reasoned decision, and do not believe that the Court will tolerate the prosecutor’s actions in this case, especially when life or death are at issue.

We are also hopeful that Governor Tom Corbett and the Pennsylvania Board of Pardons will now grant clemency in light of Judge Sarmina’s decision and the significance of the evidence that prosecutors kept from the Board during their life or death deliberations. A majority of the Board, including Attorney General Linda Kelly, previously voted in favor of clemency. Surely, after considering the new evidence, they will not allow this execution to go forward.”

Shawn Nolan, attorney for Terry Williams
September 28, 2012

For more information please go to: www.terrywilliamsclmency.com