

The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine  
Office of the Governor  
Patrick Henry Building  
1111 East Broad Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

December 20, 2009

Dear Governor Kaine,

I write to ask for justice, for compassion, for urgent redress. I write to ask for Joe Giarratano's freedom.

You have received many pleas on his behalf. That is fitting. He is worthy of such support. He also is worthy of your clemency.

I have known Joe almost 20 years. I met him on Virginia's Death Row and was with him in the death facility in Richmond. Though I was his advocate, he was my teacher. He taught me about resiliency, endurance, and dignity. He taught me one can care for others though he's been forsaken himself. He taught me one can retain his humanity in the most callous of circumstances. He taught me one can be denied even the rudiments of formal education, yet emerge erudite and eloquent.

Moreover, I believe Joe is innocent of the crime for which he is imprisoned. I know no court has ever convicted him based on all the available evidence. I know the state has frustrated his opportunity to get a full and fair hearing. Virginia authorities lost or destroyed key evidence, some of which bore DNA that might have conclusively exonerated Joe. Virginia's Attorney General, Mary Sue Terry, capriciously dismissed the chance for a new trial Governor Douglass Wilder, based on consuming doubt of guilt, had offered him.

Governor Kaine, you are the last hope of Joe Giarratano and those of us who know he deserves freedom. The New Year and those that follow will be enriched if you grant this prayer. We thank you. I am

Sincerely,

Richard L. Schaeffer