



## Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Corrections Section

### Prisons, Nonprofits Coach Juvenile Lifers to Rejoin Society

Adam Gellar

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What happens when an inmate locked up at 16 or 17, and never expecting to get out, is released into a very different world at 50, 60 or older?

The parole of dozens of former juvenile lifers, set in motion by a U.S. Supreme Court ruling, raises a host of questions about how those freed will navigate life on the outside. Some of those involved in the process say not enough is being done to make those transitions work.

The court's ruling last year — extending its earlier ban on mandatory life without parole for juvenile offenders to more than 2,000 already in prison — sent states scrambling to resentence inmates and prepare some for release.

"All of the institutions that are serving these guys and monitoring them as they're coming into the community could do more. But everybody is struggling to catch up," said Barbara Kaban, who previously oversaw juvenile lifer cases for Massachusetts' public defender agency.

A lawsuit filed by Kaban forced that state last year to change rules delaying juvenile lifers' transfer to minimum security prisons, where inmates are assigned to outside work crews and eventually to jobs where they can get vocational skills. As a result, six or seven juvenile lifers were moved, said Christopher Fallon, a Department of Correction spokesman.

Nonprofits and others in some states have stepped in to help these prisoners start over. Most of the responsibility,

though, remains with offenders and their families.

#### PRISONS PREPARE

Some states have expanded re-entry programs to former lifers nearing parole. Louisiana, for example, now requires those inmates to take the standard 100 hours of training in subjects like decision-making and money management and to earn a high school equivalency certificate. Prison officials enroll inmates in Medicaid before release, said Ken Pastorick, a spokesman for the Louisiana Department of Corrections.

Michigan is moving juvenile lifers expected to be paroled to a prison near Detroit so they can be near family and participate in education and training programs. Nearly 80 of the state's 360 juvenile lifers are there.

Pennsylvania now allows juvenile lifers to meet with a psychologist once a month, otherwise reserved for inmates with mental health issues, said corrections spokeswoman Amy Worden. State staffers also conduct financial education seminars for lifers and make virtual reality videos to familiarize them with halfway houses and modern supermarkets. After the Supreme Court banned mandatory life without parole for juveniles homicide offenders in 2012, Pennsylvania prison officials began holding videoconfer-

ences to answer lifers' questions. The state has released 81 of the 517 inmates originally sentenced to mandatory life for crimes committed as juveniles.

Most of the juvenile lifers released so far across the U.S. have been out of prison a year or less. Prison officials in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Louisiana, which together had nearly 1,200 of these inmates, said that, to date, none has been returned to prison for violating parole or committing another crime.

#### PLANNING FOR RELEASE

Advocacy groups in several states, working with defense attorneys, are researching lifers' history in preparation for resentencing and putting together plans showing where the inmate will live and work outside prison.

"Prosecutors, judges, everybody wants to know what their re-entry will look like," said Motoki Taniguchi, coordinator of Project Reentry, a program within the Michigan appellate defender's office.

Mentors from the Pennsylvania Prison Society, most former inmates, have met with about 40 juvenile lifers before parole, said Steve Gotzler, who runs the program. The program includes workshops on 20 topics — from how to get an ID and put together a resume to how a lifer can explain to the outside world where they've been all these years.

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## Fall 2017 - Corrections Now

### Message from the Chair



As we close out our fall semesters, I wanted to take this opportunity to remind you (in addition to the weekly reminders you've received from ACJS) that our 2018 conference is just around the corner. We will be completing the criminology/criminal justice circuit of New Orleans (ASC in 2016, SCJA in 2017, and ACJS in 2018) and, as always, it should be a lot of fun. We have a number of interesting panels scheduled in the area of corrections. Additionally, we will host our annual Awards breakfast meeting and support a number of other interesting events. Be sure to make plans to join us for our breakfast at 8:00 on Saturday, February 17, where we will honor our award recipients, welcome in a new slate of officers, and hear what is sure to be an interesting keynote address from a leader in corrections. My review of the preliminary program revealed over 70 panels on corrections

and sentencing, so I'm sure there are numerous panels that will interest you, no matter what your flavor of research and teaching in corrections. It should be a great meeting. Finally, on behalf of the Section and the executive board, I would like to thank Deb Vegh for her leadership in the section over the last few years. Deb has moved on to a research position outside of academia and, being the responsible person that she always has been, tendered her resignation from the board in the early part of the fall semester. We will miss her terribly but we also know she's made a great impact in our section and feel honored by that impact. Her resignation has caused a slight change to our normal officer rotation. Had Deb not resigned, she would have assumed the role of chairperson at the 2018 meeting. Rather than have an election for a vice-chair who would have immediately assumed the chairperson role,

with the board's approval, I have agreed to serve as chair until 2019, when the vice-chairperson will assume the chairperson role, and we will return to our normal two-year rotation for the chairperson position. Jeff Bouffard has also agreed to serve another year as immediate past chairperson until that point. This discussion brings me to my final point. In the very near future, you will be receiving an electronic ballot for our section officer slate. We will be electing a new secretary, a vice-chairperson, and an executive councilor. Please take a brief moment when you receive that email to cast your vote for the candidate of your choice. Thanks for all you do for corrections in your university and your community, and I look forward to seeing you in New Orleans in February.

~ Dave

## 2018 Section Awards and Scholarships



Nominations for the 2018 awards and scholarships are being accepted now through **January 1, 2018**. Nominations can be sent to [ACJS.Corrections@gmail.com](mailto:ACJS.Corrections@gmail.com). Please check the Corrections Section website for further information.

### John Howard Award

The nominee **MUST** have made significant contributions to practice, but may have made significant contributions in scholarship, teaching, policy, or service.

### Outstanding Section Member

Requires membership in and preferably contribution to the ACJS Corrections Section; and significant research and/or scholarship in the field of corrections. Self nominations are allowed and encouraged.

### Dr. Kelly Cheeseman Student Paper Travel Scholarship

Students presenting papers at the ACJS annual conference are encouraged to submit their papers to the Awards committee for consideration for receipt of the travel scholarship. A letter of recommendation or support from a faculty advisor is advised.

## Prisons, Nonprofits Coach Juvenile Lifers to Rejoin Society...continued

### OUTSIDE THE GATE

The Louisiana Parole Project has coached some of the first few juvenile lifers released through their first week on the outside, matching them with former inmates who can provide guidance. The program was started by Keith Nordyke, an attorney representing many of the state's juvenile lifers in parole hearings, and Andrew Hundley, a juvenile lifer released last year after serving nearly two decades for murder. Hundley guides newly released inmates through stores and restaurants, and shows them how to use a phone and navigate everyday interactions. Inmates stay in a halfway house during the program, but most are expected to move in with family. Louisiana has about 300 juvenile lifers, and a handful of parole hearings are scheduled for later this year.

In Michigan, Taniguchi's group of social work graduate students conducts evening seminars on technology and social relationships and has helped some inmates find short-term housing and connect with family. In Pennsylvania, Gotzler recalled helping one former lifer open a bank account and another with instructions on how to order a meal.

Gotzler advises many to do a voluntary stay at a halfway house, allowing time to adjust. In Pennsylvania, only a quarter of those released have gone to such a facility. After four decades in prison, one lifer confided in Gotzler about moving home with his 90-year-old mother and other relatives: "They're treating me like I'm 15 years old, and I'm 58."

Landlords often will not rent to those with a felony record and many offenders who went to prison as teens do not have stable families to go back to, said Kristina Wildeveld, a Las Vegas attorney who has represented juvenile lifers before the parole board. Wildeveld said she and her husband had put up four former inmates in their rental properties without charge in recent years to help them make the transition.

### FINDING A JOB

This fall, former lifer Paulette Carrington has been commuting 2 1/2 hours each way — by bus, trolley, train and finally another bus — to reach a job training program in Philadelphia.

"Anything good is never easy. Never. I've learned that the hard way," said Carrington, jailed at 16 for murder and released in April after serving more than 39 years. Carrington was convicted of killing the 15-year-old son of her father's girlfriend. Carrington said the woman had cut her face with a pocket razor during an argument. Not long after, Carrington said she lashed out with a knife when the other teen threatened to tell his mother Carrington had come home late.

Carrington, 56, is one of three former lifers who recently completed a program run by Uplift Solutions, a nonprofit started by the owner of a local supermarket chain. After six weeks of training, she began work as a cashier at one of the stores. She's been living in a room provided by a host family, and hopes the paycheck will allow her to get her own place.

Many former lifers come out with years of experience working prison jobs, but may know little about how to assemble a resume or apply for jobs online.

The challenge is complicated by a "fear that other people will see them as a danger," said Hillary Facchine, the job coach in the Philadelphia office of the Center for Employment Opportunities, where about a dozen former juvenile lifers have recently gone through a program to put former inmates to work. Those who enroll get a week of orientation, \$12-an-hour work

crew jobs at local parks, and advice on finding long-term employment.

They include Norman Bryant, 47, released in April after serving 32 years for second-degree murder. During a 1985 break-in with a 14-year-old friend and Bryant's 17-year-old brother, his brother shoved the homeowner, who died of a heart attack. All got life sentences.

"Right now I'm just taking whatever I can get," said Bryant, who now works in a friend's store. "You've got to crawl before you walk."

### HELPING EACH OTHER

Former lifers know better than anyone else what others in their situation are dealing with, said Kaban, the Massachusetts attorney. In her state, she said, there is no formal network of released lifers, and parole often comes on the condition that they stay away from others with a felony record.

But some released lifers in Pennsylvania have been attending resentencing hearings to back others who may soon be out. And once a month, a group of ex-lifers meets in Philadelphia to hear speakers and exchange information about job searches, adjusting to home life and other issues, said John Pace, a former lifer released in February. Pace, who served more than 31 years on a murder conviction for mugging a man who died from his injuries, earned a college degree in prison and leads the group.

"Now you're in this big, vast world and you have to negotiate life on your own and make decisions regarding your life," he said. It helps "being able to talk with someone who's going through the same thing."

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## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The 55th annual meeting of ACJS will be held **February 13-17, 2018, at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside, New Orleans, LA.**

The conference theme is “So What? Understanding What It All Means.”

The Section’s awards ceremony and general business meeting will

take place on **Saturday** from 8:00-9:30am.

Your assistance will be called upon to cover the Section table during the conference. Look for that email and as always, we appreciate our volunteers!

Suggestions are welcome for a **corrections-related charitable organization** in the New Orleans area. Please inform the E-Board via email:

**ACJS.Corrections@gmail.com** for consideration of a donation made on behalf of the Section **by January 1.**



**See you in New Orleans!!!!**

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### Corrections Section Purpose

The purpose of the Corrections Section is to bring together academy members who have a particular interest in corrections, to facilitate and encourage research and theory development related to corrections, to encourage appropriate and effective teaching techniques and practices for corrections courses, to serve as a resource network for and encourage interaction among academic, research, practitioner and policy-making sectors in order to further knowledge about corrections, and to encourage the organization of corrections-related conference activities.

**Solicitations for op-eds or research items are welcome for the next edition of the newsletter!!**

**Email us!**

### Catch Us on Social Media!!

**LinkedIn:** ACJS Corrections Section

**Facebook Community:** ACJS Corrections Section

<https://www.facebook.com/ACJSCS/?fref=ts>

**Twitter:** @ACJS\_CS

### Executive Board

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