

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF KEO, AR
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May 22, 2013

Institutional Release Services
Executive Clemency Department
2801 S. Olive St.
Suite 6-D
Pine Bluff, AR 71603

IN RE: Clemency Application for commutation of time for Mr. James Strouthers ADC #062334

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I am Rizelle Aaron. In 2008 I became the Chair of the Legal Redress Committee for the Jacksonville Branch of the NAACP. I received a request for assistance from Ms. Carolyn Luke of Chicago, IL in reference to her brother Mr. James Strouthers. Mr. Strouthers an African American male was convicted of 1st Degree Murder in 1971 of Marshall Stout a white male. Ms. Luke believes that Strouthers didn't commit the murder and requested that we investigate the case.

I have reviewed hundreds of court records in reference to the arrest and conviction of Strouthers and here is a brief summary of my findings. Mr. Strouthers first Public Defender was also the private family attorney of the victim Marshall Stout. Karen Bogard a teenage white female witness was the first one to find the victim's body and in two separate statements to police gave a description of a white male leaving the scene of the crime immediately after the shooting. The police later identified Rubin Davis an African American male as a truck driver that was in the area that night. Rubin Davis was dying from cancer several years ago and was rumored to have confessed to the killing of Marshall Stout prior to his death. Betty Sue Pye an African American female was the girlfriend of Strouthers at that time. Pye had a twin brother by the name of Billy Joe Pye. Pye claims that police threatened to charge her and her brother with the murder of Marshall Stout if she didn't say that Strouthers killed Stout. Pye didn't testify at trial and the state claimed to have sent Pye to Juvenile Detention for her alleged role.

I located Betty Sue Pye by telephone in Palo Alto California. Betty Sue confirmed the previous information. Pye stated that she was never sent to Juvenile, but instead her family was told to get her out of town. Pye stated that she was afraid to give to go on the record with the information, because she didn't know if she could be prosecuted at this time for giving the false statement that convicted an innocent man (James Strouthers). Pye has since moved and changed her telephone number. I have tried to relocate Pye unsuccessfully. Her brother Billy Joe Pye died some time ago. Strouthers couldn't read or write at that time and stated that officers of the North Little Rock Police Department beat him until he signed the confession.

I have located one of those officers named Gene Barentine a white male. Barentine retired from NLRPD and is now the Sherwood, AR District Court Bailiff. Kaye McLoughlin a white female was the clerk typist for NLRPD at the time Strouthers gave his confession. McLoughlin married one of the officers involved

and is now known as Kaye Brown and is the Executive Secretary to the NLRPD Chief of Police. Barentine and Brown claim to not remember much about the nigh profile murder case of the prominent liquor store owner Marshall Stout. The records reflect that Officer Barentine and Clerk Typist Brown (McCloughlin) were involved in the confessions of Pye and Strouthers.

Finally, in 2007 Strouthers was recommended for Executive Clemency and was denied by Governor Beebe in 2008. Strouthers has always maintained his innocence. He has been an exemplary inmate and to my knowledge has NOT received any disciplinary actions while incarcerated during the past 42 years. I have been ministering to Strouthers and also baptized Strouthers at Cummins Prison.

Based on the totality of the circumstances and information of this case I respectfully request the approval of this application for executive clemency (commutation of time) and further request the approval of the Governor of the Great State of Arkansas.

Sincerely



Rizelle Aaron, Pastor
First Baptist Church of Keo