



Capital Punishment Research Initiative

The Capital Punishment Research Initiative (CPRI) was founded in the late 1990s at the School of Criminal Justice, University at Albany. The CPRI has a three-fold mission: (I) build and maintain a national archive for historical documents and data on the death penalty; (II) plan and conduct basic and policy-related research on capital punishment; and (III) encourage scholarship; conduct graduate, undergraduate and public education; and disseminate scientifically grounded knowledge about the ultimate penal sanction.

I: NATIONAL ARCHIVE

The National Death Penalty Archive (NDPA): A chief component of the CPRI plan for a national center on capital punishment has been to establish and maintain a collection of archival materials to document the history of capital punishment and to preserve resources for historical scholarship. Through collaboration with the University at Albany Library's M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, the CPRI has established the National Death Penalty Archive (<http://library.albany.edu/speccoll/ndpa.htm>).

Among the current collections in the National Death Penalty Archive are the following:

- The Hugo Adam Bedau Papers
- The Alvin Ford Collection
- The Capital Jury Project Collection
- The William J. Bowers Papers
- The Death Penalty in New York Testimony
- The Bill Babbitt Papers
- The Clemency Petitions in Capital Cases Collection
- David Von Drehle Papers

II: BASIC AND POLICY-RELATED RESEARCH

The Capital Jury Project: Initiated in 1991 by William J. Bowers and now located at CPRI, this continuing program of research on the decision making of capital jurors is conducted by a consortium of university-based researchers from 14 states. With support from the National Science Foundation (NSF), the new CJP research being conducted by Dr. Bowers at CPRI is a study of jurors' receptivity to mitigation. It draws on trial transcripts for detailed evidence of the mitigation to which jurors were exposed in preparation for interviewing them about making their punishment decisions.

The Abolitionist Oral History Project involves conducting videotaped interviews with a wide variety of American activists in an effort to build an oral history of the mid-20th century and post-Furman v. Georgia (1972) movement to end capital punishment in America.

Clemency Petitions as a Key to Wrongful Executions:

Unlike judicial proceedings, claims raised in clemency petitions are not barred by procedural defaults that can mask error, unfairness, or irrationality in a death sentence or conviction. These petitions thus afford a unique vantage point for studying the fundamental fairness, accuracy, and reliability of death sentences in cases that usually end in the defendant's execution. CPRI is undertaking the acquisition of all clemency petitions filed on behalf of death row prisoners facing execution.

III: EDUCATION, TRAINING, DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

The CPRI serves as a locus for public education, conferences, collaborative research efforts, and undergraduate and advanced graduate training with respect to capital punishment in America. Periodic seminars, scholarly publications, a newsletter, an expanded web site, and the National Death Penalty Archive are all components of the CPRI, and avenues by which research findings and related information will be disseminated. Future plans include training internships, attracting scholars on sabbatical, and post-doctoral study. To date, over 50 students in the law and social sciences have participated in research activities at the CPRI.

RESEARCH UNDER DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the ongoing archival and research projects of national scope noted above, several other efforts are in the planning stage at the CPRI. These projects involve collaboration with scholars from other universities and law schools.

Conditions of Confinement on State and Federal

Death Rows: This work is designed to learn about the conditions of confinement confronting death-sentenced prisoners and the impact of such confinement on the prisoners and corrections officers within the institution. It also will focus on what happens to the many death row prisoners whose sentences are reduced to life imprisonment and who eventually are released into the broader prison population.

The Role of Punishment for Surviving Family

Members of Murder Victims: Little is known about how survivors' psychological orientations and personal values, as well as their relationships with the murder victim, shape their thinking about the appropriate punishment. Nor do we understand the effects of lengthy delays and frequent case reversals on the quest for "closure" that often is attributed to murder victims' family members.

The Capital Punishment Research Initiative (CPRI): preserving historical scholarship while developing the next generation of death penalty research.

USE THIS TEAR OFF CARD TO:

- Donate my papers to the National Death Penalty Archive (NDPA)
- Be interviewed as part of the Oral History Project
- Receive periodic updates via an electronic CPRI Newsletter
- Learn more about educational and research opportunities at CPRI
- Volunteer my time to help the CPRI and its various projects

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School of Criminal Justice

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
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In order to provide resources to advance the educational mission of the Capital Punishment Research Initiative, I/we will contribute the amount of \$_____ to the University at Albany Foundation. The University at Albany Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation established in 1967 to encourage philanthropic contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations and other organizations to support University at Albany activities and programs.

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The CPRI is a tax-exempt, non-profit organization.

The CPRI actively seeks funds from several sources, including public or private, agency or individual, governmental or non-governmental, in an effort to secure its place as a fully functioning center within the university setting.