An article on the Tex Parte blog discusses the luncheon at the Law Center held in honor of the publication of *American Justice in the Age of Innocence*, prepared by Professor Thompson and her students. State Senator Rodney Ellis was the luncheon’s keynote speaker, discussing Texas’ legislative reforms to combat wrongful convictions.

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Book by University of Houston Law Center professor, students addresses legal issues related to wrongful convictions

Sandra Thompson  The University of Houston Law Center is hosting a luncheon on campus today to raise awareness about wrongful convictions and to celebrate the publication of a book, “American Justice in the Age of Innocence.” “The book is basically a public service project that my students and I did to try and put some literature out on some of the important legal issues related to wrongful convictions,” says law professor Sandra Guerra Thompson (pictured), director of the law school’s Criminal Justice Institute (CJI). State Sen. Rodney Ellis, D-Houston, will be the luncheon’s keynote speaker and will discuss Texas’ legislative reforms to combat wrongful convictions, she says. Cornelius Dupree Jr., who served 30 years in prison before DNA testing led to his exoneration, will also be a guest at the luncheon, Thompson notes. Students in Thompson’s spring 2010 seminar, Hot Topics in Criminal Law, contributed to the book by writing chapters on specific topics, such as eyewitness identifications and false confessions, and by helping edit the work, she says. One chapter addresses the Texas law on obtaining DNA testing. “What it shows is that, just because a person is innocent, it doesn’t mean they will have access to DNA testing,” she says. Thompson served on the Timothy Cole Advisory Panel on Wrongful Convictions, which submitted reform recommendations to the Texas Task Force on Indigent Defense in August 2010. The book, self-published by the CJI through iUniverse, was released in July and is available on Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com, she says. Book proceeds will go to the CJI. “We have already sent out copies of the book to all the legislators on the [Texas] criminal justice committee,” Thompson says. “We want to bring more awareness about wrongful convictions to the general public and to legislators who have some say in changing the laws in Texas.”

-- Jeanne Graham