

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 2, 2014

UH Law Center Texas Innocence Network is spotlighted in BBC capital punishment broadcast

Documentary tracks efforts of Prof. David Dow and students to spare life of death row inmate.

April 2, 2014 – An estimated one million television viewers in the United Kingdom tuned in this week to watch a documentary on capital punishment in which University of Houston Law Center Professor David Dow, the Texas Innocence Network he founded, and a law student play prominent roles.

BBC Three spent nearly a year filming at the Law Center, interviewing Dow, Kelly Hickman, who graduated in 2013, and other members of Dow's legal team, as they worked to win a stay of execution for a convicted murderer, Robert Pruett. The three-part broadcast series is titled "Life and Death Row" and UH Law Center's death penalty clinic was profiled in the final episode. The producers are hopeful the series will be picked up in the United States.

Created in 2000, the Texas Innocence Network (TIN), based at the University of Houston Law Center, is Texas' oldest innocence network which provides pro bono legal services to those convicted of capital crimes. Dow, who has been at the Law Center for more than 25 years, has represented more than 100 death row inmates in their state and federal appeals. Hickman worked for two years with TIN as a law student and is currently a full-time supervising attorney.

Pruett, now 34, was sentenced to die in 1999 for stabbing a prison guard to death in retaliation for being written up in a disciplinary report. At the time, Pruett was serving a 99-year sentence for killing a neighbor when he was 16.

Dow, Hickman, clinical professor Jeff Newberry, and several other Law Center students initially won a stay for further DNA testing on a blood sample, which proved inconclusive. A judge last month declined further delay, ruling that any future testing would most likely also be inconclusive, and set a new execution date for May 21.

The Texas Innocence Network team is filing a new appeal on the grounds that the DNA found at the murder scene is common to about 30 percent of the population. They also claim Pruett received ineffective counsel during the punishment phase of his trial.

The BBC Three series was prompted in part by a survey showing that a majority of young people in the U.K. support return to capital punishment which was abolished there in 1965.

Media Contacts: Carrie Criado, UH Law Center Executive Director of Communications and Marketing, 713-743-2184, cacriado@central.uh.edu; John T. Kling, UH Law Center Communications Manager, 713- 743-8298, jtkling@central.uh.edu; or Stephen B. Jablonski,

Media Specialist, 713-743- 1634, sbjablon@central.uh.edu.

About the University of Houston

The [University of Houston](#) is a Carnegie-designated Tier One public research university recognized by The Princeton Review as one of the nation's best colleges for undergraduate education. UH serves the globally competitive Houston and Gulf Coast Region by providing world-class faculty, experiential learning and strategic industry partnerships. Located in the nation's fourth-largest city, UH serves more than 39, 500 students in the most ethnically and culturally diverse region in the country.

About the University of Houston Law Center

The [University of Houston Law Center](#) is the leading law school in the nation's fourth-largest city. Founded in 1947, it is a top-tier institution awarding Doctor of Jurisprudence (J.D.) and Master of Laws (LL.M.) degrees. The Law Center is fully accredited by the American Bar Association and is a member of the Association of American Law Schools.