Contact TYLA at tyla@texasbar.com or go to tyla.org.

A Call for JUSTICE

THE TEXAS YOUNG LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (TYLA) HAS LONG BEEN COMMITTED to educating both the public and legal professionals about wrongful convictions through its *And Justice for All* initiative. This interactive website was created in 2016 to shed light on the causes of wrongful convictions and reforms meant to prevent such injustices.

In 1995, at the age of 19, Richard Miles was wrongfully convicted of murder and attempted murder in Dallas. His conviction was primarily based on eyewitness misidentification and prosecutorial misconduct, including the suppression of exculpatory evidence. After serving 15 years in prison, Miles was released in 2009 and officially exonerated in 2012 when the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals declared him factually innocent. His case serves as a poignant example of how systemic flaws can lead to devastating personal consequences. Incorporating the story of Richard Miles into this initiative would not only provide a compelling human narrative but also underscore the vital role of integrity in the pursuit of justice.

Last November, I had the privilege of observing Miles during an interview about his wrongful conviction, conducted for the purpose of adding his story to TYLA's website later this year. His narrative vividly illustrates the human cost of wrongful convictions and highlights critical issues such as prosecutorial misconduct, faulty eyewitness testimony, and evidence suppression—factors frequently at the root of such miscarriages of justice. By featuring his story, TYLA can promote valuable discussions on these issues.

Miles' post-exoneration efforts further enrich his story. Using compensation received under the Texas wrongful conviction compensation statute, he founded Miles of Freedom, an organization dedicated to helping formerly incarcerated individuals reintegrate into society. The organization focuses on key areas such as employment support, addressing the significant challenges exonerees face upon release. His work exemplifies how a person, even after enduring profound injustice, can contribute positively to society.

Additionally, we interviewed Miles' attorney, professor Cheryl Wattley, about her experience representing him in his exoneration case. Incorporating Wattley's perspective offers a unique dual view: that of the lawyer fighting for justice and the wrongfully convicted individual seeking vindication. Her unwavering commitment to doing what is right serves as a beacon for future lawyers, illustrating how a single legal professional's dedication can profoundly impact lives.

For legal professionals, Miles' case is a critical study in the importance of ethical conduct, thorough investigation, and the relentless pursuit of justice. It underscores the severe consequences that arise from legal oversights and misconduct, reinforcing the need for vigilance, integrity, and compassion within the legal system. Moreover, it exemplifies how one person—whether or not a lawyer—can drive meaningful change in society.

By adding Miles' story to the *And Justice for All* website, TYLA will enhance its educational outreach by providing a real-world example of the complexities and ramifications of wrongful convictions. His journey from wrongful imprisonment to social advocacy offers inspiration and a call to action for legal professionals to engage in efforts aimed at preventing future injustices.

For a more in-depth understanding of Miles' case and his ongoing advocacy work, legal professionals are encouraged to visit the Miles of Freedom website. Additionally, to explore TYLA's *And Justice for All* initiative and its resources on wrongful convictions, visit the official website. Together, these resources provide valuable insights into the persistent challenges of wrongful convictions and the ongoing efforts within the legal community to address them.

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2024-2025 President, Texas Young Lawyers Association

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