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Terry Jenks, Director  
Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board  
First National Center  
120 N. Robinson Ave. #900 W  
Oklahoma City, OK 73102

cell # (918) 671-1765

Re: April Rose Wilkens, DOC #282399, Commutation Request

Dear Mr. Jenks:

It is my pleasure to write this letter on behalf of April Rose Wilkens and recommend that her request for commutation be granted. As for my background, I am a licensed professional counselor and advocate for battered women and children; I've developed and taught numerous graduate courses on domestic violence and sexual assault for the University of Oklahoma; and have a Ph.D. in educational psychology from Oklahoma State University.

I met April in July of 1998 when I became involved in her case as an advocate and counselor with Domestic Violence Intervention Services (DVIS) in Tulsa, OK. At the request of the National Clearing House for the Defense of Battered Women, April's case was referred to DVIS so that she would have access to counseling during her trial.

April was initially held in the Tulsa County Adult Detention Center in Tulsa while she awaited trial. I met with her there for approximately forty hours of face-to-face counseling sessions and wrote a Pre-sentence investigative assessment report on her behalf. Since she has been incarcerated at Mabel Basset Correctional Facility, I have maintained contact with April for the past 11 years. Her parents, Rex and Louise Fitchue, have also kept me apprised of the outcome of April's appeals.

My first impression of April as a sensitive, compassionate young woman has not changed since I met her all those years ago. At that time, her story of domestic violence paralleled the hundreds of stories I had heard from other women who were battered. However, the outcome of her circumstances was the most tragic of any case with which I have been involved. The photographs and forensic documentation of the brutal injuries April sustained from Terry's acts of physical and sexual violence strengthened my belief that she acted in self defense. I sincerely believed then, as I do now, that April did what she had to do to survive.

April acknowledges that Terry Carlton's death was a horrible loss for his family and at the same time April has always maintained that she would have died if she had not defended herself against Terry's brutal assaults and his threats to kill her. April also acknowledges the pain that Terry's family has endured and, I believe, for that she is truly remorseful.

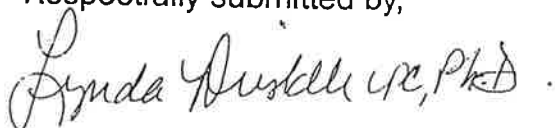
As you are aware, April has served approximately eleven years in the Oklahoma DOC. She has done so as a productive inmate who has not turned angry or bitter. She has reached out to help other inmates who lack resources or family support and has repeatedly demonstrated her empathy for others. April has an extended circle of family and friends who, as you will read in the letters that follow, have offered her employment, housing, transportation, and anything else she would need to lead her life as a responsible and productive member of society. April is looking forward to working in her field as a certified prosthetist; giving assistance to those who are in need of her sensitivity and her expertise. Her positive outlook and her exuberance are contagious and her future clients will undoubtedly benefit from their interactions with her.

April is also hoping to strengthen her relationship with her son, Hunter, and wishes for nothing more than for him to grow into a happy, well adjusted young man. I had the privilege of meeting him recently and he impressed me with his maturity and his plans to attend college this fall. Hunter is trying to make sense of the circumstances that lead to his mother's incarceration and their subsequent separation for so many years of his young life. This is a huge undertaking, and one that, I believe, he will work through with the continued love and support of his mother and his extended family.

I understand that the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board members are in a unique position to make a positive impact on the lives of others. The impact of loss and despair has taken its toll on both sides in this case. It is my hope that all parties will agree that April has paid her debt to society by way of her incarceration and rehabilitation, and that April's request for commutation will be granted.

Thank you for considering April's Commutation Request. If you require additional information please contact me at your convenience.

Respectfully submitted by,



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