

PRESS RELEASE--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 12, 2009

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PRO SE APPELLANTS TO ARGUE BEFORE D.C. COURT OF APPEALS
IN ANTI-DEATH PENALTY PROTEST CASE

WASHINGTON - On November 24 at 9:30am pro se appellants Jack Payden-Travers and Rachel Lawler will be arguing in front of the DC Court of Appeals. Appellants Payden-Travers and Lawler will represent themselves and the four other appellants in arguing that their convictions, for speaking out against the death penalty in a non-violent, peaceful act of civil disobedience, should be overturned.

Thirty years after the first execution under contemporary laws of Gary Gilmore, nine concerned citizens from North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Kansas and Vermont were arrested at the U.S. Supreme Court on January 17, 2007. The group peacefully and visibly called for an immediate cessation of all executions in the United States through civil disobedience and the risk of arrest by unfurling a 30-foot banner that read "STOP EXECUTIONS!" on the stairs of the Court. All participants were arrested and jailed for more than 30 hours before being released by a Superior Court judge late the following day. Eight defendants continued their message of abolition at a bench trial on June 28, 2008 where they were found guilty of holding a banner on the grounds of the United States Supreme Court, in violation of a US federal statute, and sentenced to time served.

Six of the defendants, Brian Buckley, Anna Shockley, Ron Kaz, Thomas Muther, along with Jack Payden-Travers and Rachel Lawler, appealed their convictions. Appellant Lawler worked with the group's attorney advisor, Mark Goldstone - a highly-regarded First Amendment lawyer based in DC, in drafting the appeal brief that was filed in 2008. Oral arguments were set to be heard based upon issues within this brief, in which the appellants challenged their convictions based upon several issues under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

This case challenges precedent for expression of First Amendment rights on the grounds of the United States Supreme Court and does so because appellants, out of conscience, brought a clear and effective message against the death penalty to the attention of many.

WHEN: 9:30 AM on Tuesday, November 24, 2009

WHERE: District of Columbia Court of Appeals, Historic Courthouse, 430 E Street N.W., Washington, DC

LISTEN LIVE: oral arguments at DCCA can be listened to live at <http://www.dcappeals.gov/dccourts/appeals/calendar/index.jsp>

MEDIA: photographs, videos, and prior coverage of the event, arrest, and trial can be found at <http://www.abolition.org/jan17-2007.html>

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