

**News**

## **BCLP TEAM SECURES LANDMARK VICTORY FOR INNOCENT DEATH ROW PRISONER**

Jun 30, 2026

A longtime BCLP Atlanta team secured a precedent-making victory for pro bono client, Jimmie “Chris” Duncan, with the Louisiana Supreme Court upholding the 2025 trial court order vacating his wrongful capital conviction based on the evidence of factual innocence uncovered by BCLP over the last 10 years.

On June 29, 2026, the Louisiana Supreme Court issued a lengthy opinion affirming the 2025 ruling from Louisiana’s Fourth Judicial District Court vacating Mr. Duncan’s 1998 conviction and death sentence for a 1993 “crime” that never occurred. Those courts together agreed that Mr. Duncan met his burden under a recently passed Louisiana statute by presenting clear and convincing evidence of his factual innocence in the accidental drowning death of Haley Oliveaux more than 30 years ago.

This week’s decision marks another major milestone in BCLP’s decade-long effort to correct one of Louisiana’s most troubling wrongful convictions. Mr. Duncan spent 27 years on Louisiana’s death row for a crime that never occurred. His conviction rested largely on forensic evidence and expert testimony that subsequent investigation and litigation demonstrated to be fundamentally false and unreliable. After years of post-conviction proceedings, including a 6-day evidentiary hearing in 2024 secured by our team following years of investigatory work, the Louisiana trial court found Mr. Duncan factually innocent in 2025, vacated his conviction, and ultimately granted his release on bail the night before Thanksgiving last year. The prosecution quickly appealed and the Louisiana Supreme Court took the opportunity to apply the Louisiana factual innocence statute for the first time since it was passed in 2021. This week’s opinion affirmed the trial court’s ruling and found that the evidence presented at the 2024 hearing “so seriously undermines the state’s countervailing evidence that the record no longer supports the state’s theory of the crime, thereby establishing by clear and convincing evidence that no rational juror would convict Duncan on the record before us.”

BCLP first accepted the case in early 2016 after then first-year associate Christian Bromley attended an informational session with the ABA’s Death Penalty Representation Project. Former lead counsel in Louisiana, Stacie Lieberman, had been in search for pro-bono assistance after

determining that Chris's post-conviction appeal deserved a second look. Many other law firms turned down the ABA and Ms. Lieberman, until BCLP volunteered to join the fight.

In a powerful concurring opinion, Louisiana Supreme Court Chief Justice Weimer observed this week the exact reason why BCLP signed on for this important work in the first place:

*This matter demonstrates we cannot be too careful in determining whether the death penalty should be implemented in cases such as this case because of the finality of the sentence and the impossibility of rectification. Such an irreversible and tragic consequence is inimical and deleterious to our system of justice if carried out based on evidence that is devoid of legitimacy. The laws of post-conviction relief have served the purpose of preventing the inappropriate application of the ultimate punishment.*

The long-time BCLP team was led by recently retired Atlanta Partner Scott Greene, Partner Christian Bromley, and Counsel Ann Ferebee, with invaluable assistance from Paralegal Stephanie Roberts. Countless others have assisted over the last ten years and collectively contributed well over 10,000 pro bono hours, with particular gratitude to retired Atlanta Partner Jennifer Odom, former Associates Julia Ost, Jackson Bailey, and Pierce Hand Seitz, as well as more recent assistance from current Atlanta Associates Ren Schmitt and Carlos Becerra-Gomez.

Working alongside our co-counsel and advocacy partners, BCLP's unwavering commitment helped achieve this remarkable result to save the life of an innocent client.

## Meet The Team



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