

October 18, 2004

To Whom It May Concern:

I write in support of Efren Paredes, who was sentenced to life without parole for a homicide and armed robbery for crimes he allegedly committed at age fifteen. Mr. Paredes has steadfastly maintained his innocence of these crimes, and there is considerable reason to believe that he is indeed wrongly convicted.

I wish to object to Mr. Paredes' conviction on two grounds. First, sentencing juveniles to life without parole is inhumane and a violation of the United Nations Convention On the Rights of the Child, which the United States signed but did not ratify.

My second objection has to do with the interpretation of Efren's expressionless demeanor at trial. The judge drew a negative inference from Efren's seeming lack of emotion; however, Efren's lawyer had instructed him, in no uncertain terms, not to show emotion in the courtroom. For this reason alone, the judge's inference would be questionable; in addition, as I have tried to show in my article, "'So Young and So Untender': Remorseless Children and the Expectations of the Law," 102 *Columbia Law Review* 1469 (2002), lack of remorse is often misread, especially in minors, and is a dubious predictor of future behavior.

I strongly urge the reconsideration of Efren Paredes' sentence.

Sincerely yours,



Dr. Martha Grace Duncan
Professor of Law

Martha Grace Duncan

Professor of Law
Emory Law School

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Martha Grace Duncan brings a rich array of experiences and credentials to her work at Emory Law School. As an undergraduate, she lived for six months in Bogota, Colombia, where she interviewed and traveled with members of the Alianza Nacional Popular, which was then Colombia's major opposition party. In graduate school, on a fellowship from the Latin American Institute of Columbia University, she journeyed to remote regions of Brazil to interview leaders of sugar worker unions and peasant movements.

For her doctoral thesis in political science, Duncan conducted in-depth interviews with life-long American activists to explore the genesis and meaning of radicalism in their lives. On the strength of this work, she was admitted as a post-doctoral candidate to the NYU Psychoanalytic Institute at New York University Medical Center.

In 1980, she matriculated at Yale Law School, where she was elected an Article and Book Review Editor of the *Yale Law Journal*. Following graduation, she clerked for Judge Robert Bork on the United States Court of Appeals for the D. C. Circuit.

Professor Duncan has published articles and essays in a range of fields and genres, including political science, history, memoir, and law. Her latest law review article, "*So Young and So Untender*": *Remorseless Children and the Expectations of the Law*, was published in the *Columbia Law Review*, and her recent memoir *A Return to Eden*, was selected as a A Notable Essay of 2002, in *the Best American Essays of 2003*. Her book, *Romantic Outlaws, Beloved Prisons: the Unconscious Meanings of Crime and Punishment* (New York University Press, 1996), received numerous favorable reviews and was reissued in paperback in 1999.

Professor of Law. B.A., Occidental College; M.A. and Ph.D. (political science), Columbia University, 1976; J.D., Yale University, 1983.

Source: Faculty Page, Emory Law School

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March 24, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Mr. Efren Paredes

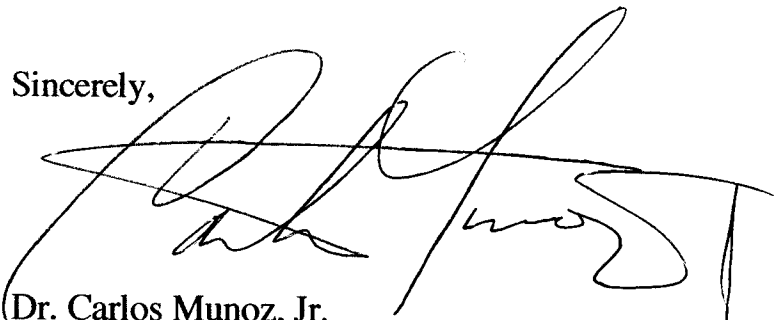
There is a grave social injustice being done in the state of Michigan. An innocent man has been kept behind bars for over 15 years for a crime he did not commit.

Mr. Paredes was only 15 years old and a high school honor student when he was arrested for a murder someone else committed. I have carefully reviewed all available legal documents made public by the Paredes family and am convinced that those who are the guilty parties railroaded him.

It is a well-documented fact that working class and poor youth do not fare well in our nation's law and order institutions. In particular, Latino and African American youth are therefore over represented in our nation's prisons. It takes money to hire good lawyers and there are not enough good lawyers doing pro bono work on behalf of those who can't afford legal representation. This explains to a large degree why Mr. Paredes has suffered the tragedy of social injustice.

The time has come for those who believe in social justice to do all possible to free him.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carlos Munoz, Jr.', written in a cursive style.

Dr. Carlos Munoz, Jr.
Professor Emeritus

Dr. Carlos Muñoz, Jr.

Professor Emeritus
University of California, Berkeley

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Dr. Carlos Muñoz, Jr. was born in the "segundo barrio" in El Paso, Texas, and raised in the barrios of East Los Angeles, California. He is the son of poor working class Mexican immigrants. He earned his AA from Los Angeles City Community College, his BA with honors in Political Science from California State University at Los Angeles and his Ph.D. in Government from the Claremont Graduate School. He is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Ethnic Studies, University of California, Berkeley. After 37 years of teaching in higher education, he has gained international prominence as political scientist, historian, journalist, and public intellectual.

Dr. Muñoz was the founding chair of the first Chicano Studies department in the nation in 1968 at the California State University at Los Angeles and the founding chair of the National Association of Chicana & Chicano Studies (NACCS). He is a pioneer in the creation of undergraduate and graduate curricula in the disciplines of Ethnic Studies. He is the author of numerous pioneering works on the Mexican American political experience and on African American and Latino political coalitions. His book, *Youth, Identity, Power: The Chicano Movement* won the Gustavus Myers Book Award for "outstanding scholarship in the study of human rights in the United States." The book is in its 12th printing and was a major resource for the PBS television series "Chicano! History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement." Dr. Muñoz was the senior consultant for the project and was also featured in the series. He has also been featured in several other documentary films. He is currently working on several new books: *Diversity and The Challenge for a Multiracial Democracy In America*, a biographical novel on *The Life & Times of Dr. Ernesto Galarza* (the first Mexican American nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature), and *The Latino Experience in Major League Baseball*. He has also begun work on his autobiography *Victory is in the Struggle*.

Dr. Muñoz is an acknowledged expert on the issues of ethnic and racial politics, multiculturalism and diversity, immigration, civil and human rights, and affirmative action. He has appeared on PBS, NBC, CNN, ABC, CBS, and the Spanish-speaking UNIVISION and Tele Mundo. He is a syndicated columnist with the Progressive Media Project. His newspaper columns are distributed nationally by the Knight-Ridder news wire service and have appeared online on Latino.com and on the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) World Service (Europe & Latin America).

As a scholar-activist, Dr. Muñoz has been a central figure in the struggles for civil and human rights, social justice, and peace in the United States and abroad since he was a student activist in the 1960s. He played a prominent leadership role as a founder of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement. Since then he has served as a leading organizer of various multiracial coalitions, including the Faculty for Human Rights in Central America, Faculty Against Apartheid in South Africa, and The Rainbow Coalition. In 1988, he was a key advisor to the Jesse Jackson

presidential campaign. He served on the Board of Directors of the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California and is a co-founder of the Institute for Multiracial Justice in San Francisco, California. He also co-founded Latinos Unidos, a grassroots community organization in Berkeley, California. Dr. Muñoz is a Vietnam Era Veteran and a member of the Veterans for Peace and is active in the Counter-Military Recruitment in the Public Schools Movement as well as in the larger Anti-Iraq War Movement.

In addition to the numerous academic honors he has been awarded during his academic career, Dr. Muñoz is also listed in *Who's Who in the West*, *Who's Who Among Hispanic Americans*, *Who's Who of Editors, Writers, and Poets*, and in the *Latino Encyclopedia*. In 1996, he received the University of Michigan's "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Cesar Chavez, and Rosa Parks Award." In 1999, Dr. Muñoz received the Scholar of the Year Award from the National Association of Chicana & Chicano Studies. In 2001, the American Political Science Association honored Dr. Muñoz for his "Seminal scholarly contributions to the study of Mexican American and Latino Politics." In 2005, Dr. Muñoz was honored by the Harvard Graduate School of Education for "Educating others and inspiring them in the pursuit of their goals."

He is currently being honored in a traveling national exhibition tour as one of 28 civil rights activists "Who accomplished Extraordinary Deeds that changed the face of the Nation and gave birth to the Modern Civil Rights Movement." The exhibition is entitled "The Long Walk To Freedom." It includes a video, historical and contemporary photographs, and a graphic timeline developed by the Schomburg Center for Research and Black Culture. It was organized by Community Works and funded by The National Endowment for the Arts, The California Arts Council, and the Friends and Foundation of the San Francisco Public Library.

Dr. Muñoz has lectured at most of the prestigious universities, including Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Michigan, Texas, and numerous less known state and community colleges throughout the nation. He has also been a keynote speaker for non-academic institutions including U.S. Government agencies, non-profit community agencies, public schools, and professional associations and groups. He has a well-known reputation as a dynamic and inspirational speaker.



Institute for MultiRacial Justice

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October 31, 2005

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to support Efren Paredes, who was arrested in 1989 and sentenced to life without parole for crimes he allegedly committed at age fifteen. Mr. Paredes has constantly maintained his innocence of these crimes and there is strong reason to believe he was wrongly convicted.

My concern, together with my belief in his innocence, is that it is simply inhuman to sentence a juvenile to life without parole. It is contrary to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The fact that a bill has been introduced in Michigan by a state senator to abolish the imposition of life without parole on juveniles speaks to the widespread rejection of this practice by knowledgeable citizens.

Let me add that in my own extensive experience as a Mexican American historian, author of six books, and adjunct professor in the California State University system, I have come across many examples of injustice imposed on my community. The case of Efren Paredes is clearly yet another of these, and particularly troubling. To give just one recent example: Mr. Paredes' trial attorney had advised him to show no emotion during his trial, which had a very negative effect on the sentencing phase. Until recently the attorney always denied giving this advice. However, he has now admitted it, a fact that is included in Mr. Paredes' current appeal.

The case of Efren Paredes and dozens of others now serving sentences of life without parole in Michigan for crimes they allegedly committed when juveniles, cry out for justice. For an end to the violation of their human rights. This is particularly true for those coming from communities that have suffered repression and exploitation throughout U.S. history. I urge you to affirm a future of truth and justice for us all.

Sincerely,


Dr. Elizabeth Martinez, Director

Dr. Elizabeth "Betita" Martínez

Director
Institute for MultiRacial Justice

betital@aol.com

Phone: (415) 701-9502

An activist, author, and teacher, Elizabeth ("Betita") Martínez's political work began as a United Nations' researcher on colonialism. In the 1960s, she served full-time in the Black Civil Rights Movement with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in Mississippi and as coordinator of its New York Office.

In 1968, she moved to New Mexico and co-founded and edited the Chicano movement newspaper *El Grito del Norte* for five years; she then went on to co-found and coordinate the Chicano Communications Center, a barrio-based project. Since 1976, she has lived in the San Francisco Bay Area, working with youth groups, teaching Women's and Ethnic Studies part-time at various California universities, and speaking about Latino issues on dozens of campuses nationwide. She initiated and is director of the Institute for MultiRacial Justice.

Out of her activist experience came many articles and six books, including *Letters from Mississippi* and *The Youngest Revolution: A Personal Report on Cuba* (both under the name Sutherland); *Viva la Raza: The Struggle of the Mexican-American People* (with Enriqueta Vásquez); *Guatemala: Tyranny on Trial*; *The Art of Rini Templeton*, as co-editor; and *De Colores Means All of Us: Latina Views for a Multi-Colored Century*. Her best-known work is the popular, bilingual volume, *500 Years of Chicano History in Pictures*, in print since 1976 and the basis for the video she co-directed, *Viva la Causa: 500 Years of Chicano History*. She writes for *Z* and other magazines, and has received many awards for community service and leadership.

HUMAN RIGHTS CLINIC
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May 12, 2005

Efran Paredes
203116
Cotton Correctional Facility
3500 N. Elm Rd.
Jackson, Michigan 49201

Dear Efran,

Thank you very much for taking the time to meet with me, Alyson, and Nicole on Friday, April 8. I enjoyed talking with you and hearing of your experiences. Because of your openness and desire to share your knowledge, I learned much from you. I have already incorporated some of your comments into the petition we are preparing to submit to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. I know that your participation made it a better document.

I also want to thank you for your letter explaining more of your answers to my questions, such as how you are able to remain positive knowing you are innocent of the charges. Alyson and Nicole were nice enough to send it on to me.

We are continuing our work on the petition against juvenile life without parole that we will hopefully submit to the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights in the fall. I will let you know what happens from there.

Warmest regards,



Rana Lehr-Lehnardt

Rana Lehr-Lehnardt

lehrlehnardt@hotmail.com

June 6, 2005

Re: Juveniles Sentenced to Life in Prison Without Possibility of Parole

To Whom It May Concern:

I write to express my opposition to the practice of sentencing juveniles as adults and sentencing them to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

I am an attorney, admitted to the Utah State Bar, and recently completed a master's of law with a human-rights emphasis at Columbia Law School. While at Columbia Law School, I participated in the Human Rights Clinic and was involved with a project challenging the legality of sentencing juveniles to life in prison without the possibility of parole. As part of this project, we met with several prisoners who had been sentenced as juveniles to life in prison without possibility of parole. One of the prisoners I interviewed was Efren Paredes, Jr.

Efren is serving three life sentences for a crime that he allegedly committed at the age of 15 and for which he has maintained his innocence. He is an outstanding individual who has overcome the negative influences of prison life to obtain higher education, represent fellow inmates before committees, work full time, and to continue to hope and fight for recognition of his innocence and ultimate freedom. I write not only on his behalf, but for all juveniles sentenced to life in prison without possibility of parole.

Sentencing juveniles to life without the possibility of parole ignores scientific studies that establish the immaturity of the juvenile brain and the increased possibility for rehabilitation. It sucks hope out of these juveniles, some of whom have made grave misjudgments and some who are innocent. It stifles desire or purpose to change, to improve, to progress. Sentencing juveniles to life in prison without the possibility of parole also ignores international treaty requirements to treat juveniles differently from adults, to sentence them to the least amount of prison time possible, and to ensure that prison time is focused on rehabilitation.¹ Additionally, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child—that all countries have ratified except the United States and

¹ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Arts. 10(2)(b), 10(3), 14(4)(4); Covenant on the Rights of the Child, Art. 37(b), (c); United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice, Rule 17 (adopted by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 40/33 of Nov. 29, 1985); United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency, Rule 46 (adopted by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 45/112 of Dec. 14, 1990).

Somalia—specifically prohibits sentencing juveniles to life in prison without possibility of release.²

For these reasons, I strongly urge lawmakers to recognize the injustice of sentencing juveniles to life in prison without the possibility of parole and change these laws.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rana Lehr-Lehnardt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping tail.

Rana Lehr-Lehnardt

² Art. 37(a).