

2026 CO-SPONSORED 20TH ANNUAL ACTUAL INNOCENCE: LESSONS, LEGACIES, AND A PATH FORWARD

AGENDA - DAY 1

Thursday, May 14, 2026

8:00am		Registration Opens / Light Breakfast and Refreshments
8:45am		Welcome and Opening Comments T.L. Cabbage, President of the Center for American and International Law Robert Ahdieh, Dean of the Texas A&M School of Law Leslie MacClean, President of the Innocence Project of Texas Mark Smith, Program Chair
9:00am	60min	An Example of Why We Are Here - The Austin Yogurt Shop Case Mike Ware, Executive Director of the Innocence Project of Texas and Director, Texas A&M Innocence Project Dan Jackson, Detective, Austin Police Department
10:00am	15 mins	Break
10:15am	60 mins	False Confessions - Why Do They Happen? Kyle Scherr, Central Michigan University
11:15am	15 mins	Break
11:30am	60 mins	An Alternative to the Accusatorial Method: Evidence-Based Interviewing Employed in Houston Shaun Sylvester, Houston Police Department
12:30pm	Lunch (Provided)	The Experience of the San Antonio Four Anna Vazquez Kristie Mayhugh Cassie Rivera Hurtado Liz Ramirez
1:30pm	60mins	AI and AI - The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Actual Innocence Cases Barry Scheck, Co-Founder of Innocence Project
2:30pm	15mins	Break
2:45pm	60mins	Perspectives from the Bench Judges Bert Richardson, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals Judge David Newell, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals Interviewed by Gary Udashen
3:45pm	90min	Eye Witness Identifications and Mistakes - Including a discussion of 'Nine Eye-Witness Practices That Experts Agree On Professor Laura Smalarz, Arizona State University Mike Corley, former Chief of Police, Brownwood, Texas Bill Wirsky, First Assistant District Attorney, Collin County, Texas
5:15pm	Recess	

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AGENDA - DAY 2

Friday, May 15, 2026

8:00am		Registration Opens / Light Breakfast and Refreshments
8:30am	45min	Recent Legislative and Judicial Developments Gary Udashen, Udashen and Anton, Dallas, Texas
9:15am	90mins	Cooperation and Collaboration Between the Defense and the Prosecution: Ethics, Strategy and More Patricia Cummings, former Conviction Integrity Unit Director for Dallas and Philadelphia Cynthia Garza, CIU Director Dallas, Texas Cheryl Wattley, Professor, University of North Texas Valerie Newman, Wayne County, Michigan CIU Director Tracey Brame, Cooley Innocence Project, Michigan Russell Gold, Professor, University of Alabama School of Law
11:30am	60min	What Journalists Say, With Those Who Have Covered Wrongful Conviction Cases Mike Hall, Contributor, Texas Monthly Rick Tulsy, Pulitzer Prize winner and co-founder of Injustice Watch Interviewed by Mike Ware, Executive Director of the Innocence Project of Texas
12:30pm	Lunch (Provided)	Keynote Speaker Jim McCloskey, Founder, Centurion Mr. McCloskey will be introduced by Gary Udashen, former President of the Innocence Project of Texas and exonerees Ben Spencer and Richard Miles
2:00pm	60mins	The Impact of Bias on Wrongful Convictions Professor Kim Rossmo, Texas State University
3:00pm	15mins	Break
3:15pm	45mins	Transparency in Forensic Science - Hot Button Issues Lynn Garcia, General Counsel, Texas Forensic Science Commission
4:00pm	15mins	Break
4:15:pm	45mins	Transparency in Forensic Science - Hot Button Issues continued Lynn Garcia, General Counsel, Texas Forensic Science Commission
5:00pm	15mins	Where Do We Go From Here: What We've Learned and What Remains Marissa Bluestine, Assistant Director, Quattrone Center for the Fair Administration of Justice
5:15pm	Adjourn	

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