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Dean Logan's Blog

Dedicated to the Victims of Wrongful Convictions

Posted by David Logan on 10/02/2012 at 05:03 PM

One of the sad facts about the American criminal justice system is that despite substantial constitutional protections, innocent people are convicted of serious crimes and sentenced to long jail terms (and, most distressingly, the “ultimate sanction” — the death penalty). The Innocence Project <http://www.innocenceproject.org/> has been pushing back on this front for two decades, and the story of one of those wrongful convictions is manifest in the amazing journey of our own Betty Anne Waters (RWU Law '98), who went to college and law school (at RWU) with the single goal of righting a wrong done to her brother Kenny. Her amazing story was the basis of the major motion picture from 2012, “Conviction.” <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/13/movies/13waitress.html?pagewanted=all&r=0;> <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1244754/>

On a beautiful day last week, RWU Law dedicated a bench near the main entrance of the law building in honor of Kenny Waters, who was exonerated after 18 years in prison. Betty Anne chose for the inscription a spot-on quote from Dr. Martin Luther King's “Letter from the Birmingham Jail,”: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

In a very moving ceremony, the bench was unveiled by Betty Anne's sons, and looking on were more family, some of the RWU Law faculty instrumental in Betty Anne's academic success, representatives of Innocence Projects in NY and Boston, and students who were inspired by what Betty Anne's accomplishments (including an alum who volunteers with the IP in Philadelphia). As Betty Anne observed, the bench will not only serve as a monument to her late brother but also an inspiration to future generations of RWU Law students, who can, as she did, use their legal education to make the world a better place.

Below are some pics from this wonderful event.











