

April 27, 2020

The Honorable J. Kevin Stitt
Office of the Governor, State of Oklahoma
Oklahoma State Capitol
2300 Lincoln Blvd.
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105

The Honorable C. Allen McCall, J.D.
Mr. Larry Morris
Ms. Kelly Doyle
Mr. Adam Luck
Mr. Robert Gilliland, J.D.
Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board
2519 North Classen, Suite 405
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106

Dear Governor Stitt and Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board Members,

I am writing to express my support of Julius Jones' commutation application. After 20 years on death row, the Pardon and Parole Board and the Office of the Governor now have the opportunity to correct the injustices that led Julius to be wrongfully accused and convicted.

As an immigrant who has been given incredible opportunities in the United States and, in particular, Oklahoma, I have great appreciation for the idea of the "American Dream." I also feel compelled to speak out when, as in this case, we fall short of our ideals.

One of the most important principles in American democracy is "due process" and the notion that anyone accused of a crime deserves a fair trial. A combination of racial prejudice, an inexperienced and unprepared legal team, and the withholding of key evidence from jurors denied Julius Jones of these rights. The criminal justice system failed when it convicted Julius -- a man who did not fit the eye-witness description and who was deprived of the opportunity to testify on his own behalf. It failed by appointing unqualified attorneys to Mr. Jones' case and allowing a vocally racist juror to preside over the trial.

We hear so many stories from across the country of wrongfully convicted people who have spent years of their lives behind bars. As difficult as it is to acknowledge the harm done in these cases, justice requires that measures are taken to correct past mistakes and make sure this does not continue to happen.

Julius Jones' experience is one I would not wish upon anyone, but it is not too late to look at the merits of his case and show mercy. As a former Sooner and someone who has a deep respect and appreciation for the state and people of Oklahoma, I ask for your prayerful consideration of his commutation application. Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

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

Buddy Hield
Sacramento Kings