



- For immediate release -

Supreme Court of Canada orders review for Jack White

Toronto, Canada – December 3, 2009 – The Association in Defence of the Wrongly Convicted (AIDWYC) is pleased to announce that the Supreme Court of Canada has today ordered that Jack White’s 1995 sexual assault conviction in Orillia should be reviewed again by the Ontario Court of Appeal. For 14 years, Mr. White has been fighting to clear his name and the Supreme Court of Canada’s decision is an important step towards his exoneration.

“I am so relieved to hear of today’s decision,” said Jack White. “This is a big step for me. I’m looking forward to going to the Court of Appeal and getting my good name back.”

Mr. White was wrongly convicted in 1995 of sexually assaulting a resident at the Huronia Regional Centre, where he worked as a counsellor. He was given a suspended sentence, but after his criminal conviction he was fired from his job. The Crown’s case was built around the testimony of a co-worker of White’s.

In May, 1999, an arbitration board heard the co-worker’s story and did not believe any of it. The Board ordered White reinstated with back pay. However, The Province appealed the arbitration ruling, successfully arguing that the conviction in the criminal court was final and could not be challenged at a subsequent arbitration hearing.

“AIDWYC is gratified by the Supreme Court of Canada’s decision,” said James Lockyer, a Director of AIDWYC. “We still have a lot of work to do in the Court of Appeal, but I am optimistic that justice is coming Mr. White’s way.”

Mr. White has a long history with the Huronia Regional Centre. At the age of eight, he was sent there as a resident on the strength of a claim that he was learning disabled. Thirteen years later he was released when it was discovered that he was not mentally challenged at all. After his release, he earned a Grade 12 equivalency and went on to study and receive a diploma in what was then called “Mental Retardation Services.” In 1970, Mr. White returned to Huronia Regional Centre as a counsellor.

AIDWYC is a non-profit legal organization advocating for wrongly convicted Canadians. Its clients are mostly poor and forgotten, and have exhausted all of their legal avenues for relief. In addition to championing the cause of innocent persons who have been wrongly convicted, the organization also works to prevent wrongful convictions through legal education and reform.

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