

LAW SCHOOL AND LAW FIRM JOIN FORCES TO SECURE
IMMINENT RELEASE OF LOW-LEVEL, NON-VIOLENT
DRUG OFFENDER SERVING LIFE SENTENCE

Washington, D.C., July 9, 2018 - The University of Minnesota Law School and King & Spalding LLP are delighted to announce the resentencing of Derrin Perkins, a non-violent, low-level drug offender, who was previously serving a life sentence. After 27 years in custody, Perkins is preparing to go home to his family, and is scheduled to be released later this year.

Perkins was represented, *pro bono*, in successive successful motions in D.C. federal and local courts by JaneAnne Murray, Professor of Practice and Director of the University of Minnesota Law School's Clemency Project, and Joshua Toll, Pro Bono Partner at King & Spalding, which also participated in the Clemency Project.

"Our representation of Derrin was inspired by President's Obama's focus on non-violent, low-level, long-term offenders during his administration, and is a testament to the enduring impact of his clemency initiative," Murray said. "This outcome underscores the importance of a formal 'second look' mechanism for the thousands of inmates in our prisons serving unnecessarily long and outdated sentences."

"We are so delighted to see justice done in Derrin's case," Toll said, "and are particularly grateful to the judges and prosecutors involved who recognized Perkins' rehabilitation and humanity."

Profiled on PBS (<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/obama-left-mark-criminal-justice-system>), Perkins, now 53 years old, is a stark casualty of the war on drugs. Arrested in April 1991 at age 25 in possession of 17 grams of crack, he was prosecuted in local and federal courts for drug distribution. Rejecting a plea offer of five years in his federal case and a concurrent plea in his local case, Perkins was convicted at trials in both jurisdictions. He received a sentence of life without the possibility of parole in federal court and a consecutive sentence of 6 to 18 years in the D.C. Superior Court. There was never any allegation that Perkins even carried a weapon, much less that he engaged in any act of violence. Perkins' prison record has been exemplary -- he has obtained his GED, completed a maintenance vocational training program that required participants to log over 4,000 hours, and completed a building repair apprenticeship program in HVAC systems. Throughout his incarceration, he has maintained a close relationship with his siblings and three children.

Perkins first came to Murray's attention in her work for Clemency Project 2014. She and her student William Hamilton (class of 2015) drafted a petition to commute both Perkins' federal and local sentences. The petition was denied on January 18, 2017. Within a week, Murray teamed up with Toll to explore alternative avenues for Perkins' release. Over the next 18 months, the two advocates -- supported by DC lawyer Kevin McCants -- filed four motions and six briefs on Perkins' behalf. On August 10, 2017, with the government's consent, the Hon. Thomas F. Hogan reduced Perkins' federal life sentence to 360 months. On June 29, 2018, also with the consent of the government, the Hon. Todd Edelman reduced Perkins consecutive sentence in D.C. Superior Court to 16 months. The Bureau of Prisons will now begin the process of transitioning Perkins back to society.

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