

October 7, 2008

Virginia Parole Board
6900 Atmore Drive
Richmond, VA 23225

Dear Board Members:

I will be unable to come to Richmond this year to meet personally with the Parole Board, so the purpose of this letter is to continue to express to you my deep concerns regarding the possibility of parole for Earl David Inge, inmate # 107087.

It is still so difficult to express how I truly feel inside. I don't think anyone can begin to imagine what it's like to see someone you dearly love executed right before your eyes unless you have experienced it. One cannot find the words to express the deep, deep hurt and pain that you feel. That pain is maximized a thousand times over because your two small children have just witnessed the same thing and have seen their Daddy die. The tragic reality is that the pain never goes away. It is just as real today as it was the night my husband and the father of our children was murdered.

As the years have passed, I have realized more and more the extent and magnitude of how much we, as a family, have been robbed of those special moments in life because of the evil acts Inge committed. My heart still breaks when I think that my sons have had to grow up without a Dad who loved them so very much, and who was such a vital part of their lives, even at the young ages they were when he was murdered. A Dad plays such an important role in the family, and my children have missed out on all those things that a child, especially sons, experience and learn only from their Dads. They were stripped of their role model; and what a role model he was. They were robbed of Dad being a part of their everyday lives to love, hug, and encourage them and to guide and direct them on a daily basis. They were robbed of Dad's presence to give support in school, church, sporting events and activities, holidays, vacations, graduations, personal accomplishments, marriage, births of their children, and so much more, not to mention that void of his presence in making the major decisions of their lives. That absence, in itself, has been very, very difficult and devastating at times. I have seen and heard my children cry wanting their Dad, and as they got older tell me that they just wished they could spend the day with Dad to talk with him and get his advice and views on certain issues. My heart has been broken many times because I knew there was absolutely nothing I could do to change the fact that Dad was not here. That void is always present and never goes away, even today.

I could not be more proud of my sons. They are the pride of my life. They have beaten so many odds and have grown up to be respectful, forgiving men of integrity, compassion, and givers back to society. Their Dad would be so proud of them.

My grandchildren have been robbed of knowing what a wonderful person their Granddad was, and have been denied a lifetime of the joy of spending time with him. They will never know that special relationship between a Granddad and his grandchildren and will never be able to take a walk with him, go to the park, play ball, go fishing, take vacations with him, or have him there to give advice and support them at their special events and be a part of birthdays, holidays, etc. They have been totally robbed of that Granddad relationship for their entire lives.

The insane behavior and senseless acts of Inge have caused much sorrow and many, many hardships for all of us. Life has been very difficult and stressful in every area of our lives. Being a single mom has been a tremendous challenge, but also very rewarding. The mammoth responsibility of raising your family rests entirely upon you. You never get a break. You're on call twenty-four seven. You have to handle all the problems, make all the decisions, be a chauffeur, a homemaker, a nurse, a counselor, an educator, as well as be the sole breadwinner and so much more, and at the same time, try and be a role model. It's your responsibility to see that your children get a good college education so they can have a career and do well in life. You must take on the role of mom and dad. Sometimes it gets exhausting, but you can't give up; you must keep going.

When I think that I have had to work two jobs for many years and my sons worked full-time and went to college full-time to get a college education, I feel angry at times because Inge has been taken care of by our tax money all these years. He has had a roof over his head, food in his stomach, clothes on his back, the opportunity to get an education, free health insurance, and other luxuries, all at our expense, when there was a time we didn't have health insurance because I could not afford it. It just doesn't seem fair, but I have learned that life isn't fair.

For so many years I was so busy raising our sons and trying to rebuild our lives, I didn't really think about myself and my needs. I did what I knew I had to do. However, as I have aged, I miss my husband now more than ever. That void is ever so real as I face each day and extremely miss the companionship that we shared. We were always best friends, even from the beginning of our relationship and marriage. I find myself thinking about how different things could and would be at this stage of my life if he were still alive. I have missed so much the opportunity to daily share the ups and downs of everyday life; just to have a tender touch or hug and be offered encouragement. Your mate has a special place in your heart and life that no one else can fill. I truly feel that when he was murdered a part of me died with him and that void has remained in my life to this day.

I also think about what society lost when my husband was murdered. He was so giving of himself to others. He was a 'people person' and for eleven years was personnel manager for one of the largest manufacturing plants in the area where we lived. Everyone felt at ease talking with him regardless of race, position, or background. He taught a Sunday School class for young married couples, and was a deacon and usher in our home church. It's quite ironic, but one night a week, he voluntarily counseled prisoners at the local jail. He just loved people.

It has been difficult to find closure as we have had to continuously deal with the possibility of Inge getting parole. As he comes up for parole every year, it's very hard to relive it all over again. However, I've chosen to do this because I feel this is all I can do. We truly feel that Inge should never be given the privilege of parole. We believe he lost all his rights to ever be a free person when these crimes were committed. I don't want to even think of how much more difficult life would be for us if we had to deal with knowing he was out on parole and on the street. Anyone who can break in a home and then come back and commit murder, especially in front of the person's children and family to try and prevent the one murdered from testifying against him in an upcoming trial when the one murdered has done absolutely nothing to the murderer and the murderer did not even know the one he murdered is a menace to society and a very evil person. I feel that we, at least, deserve the right to feel safer knowing he is behind bars. I truly believe it would be just a matter of time until he would do it again, and I certainly don't want my family or me to have to go through this again, and would never want anyone else to have to experience what we have. Furthermore, I am not convinced that Inge has ever shown any genuine remorse for the crimes he committed. I have asked this question a number of times but have not gotten a direct, concrete answer.

My husband's death seems so useless, but I am one who believes that there is a purpose for everything that happens in our lives. Even though I don't understand why, I know that God does not make mistakes. I believe when bad things happen, we can either become bitter or better. I have chosen to allow the Lord to bring good from these evil acts committed by Inge, and I have seen this happen. If it had not been for the Lord, my sons and I would not be where we are today, and I give the Lord all the credit for the restoration of our lives and for what has been accomplished.

Over the years I have come to the point, with the Lord's help, that I have forgiven Inge and I do pray for him to know the Lord and His love and forgiveness for his sins. However, I do believe that there are consequences for the choices we make. I sincerely believe that Inge should have gotten the death penalty, but that was not an option at the time, as the death penalty was not reinstated until after my husband was murdered. Therefore, I believe one of the consequences for the crimes Inge committed is that he should have to spend the rest of his life in prison.

I would like to thank the Parole Board for the opportunity to express my feelings and concerns. My sons and I strongly plead with you, as a board, to NOT grant parole to Earl David Inge.

Sincerely,

Judy Smith
Widow of Clifford Michael Smith