**SUMMARY OF CLEMENCY CANDIDATE JUDITH CLARK**

*“[Ms. Clark} is the most worthy candidate for clemency that I’ve seen in all my years as Parole Board Commissioner and Chairman.”*

–Robert Dennison, retired Chairman, New York State Board of Parole

*“Over many years, I watched [Ms. Clark] change into one of the most perceptive, thoughtful, helpful and profound human beings that I have ever known either inside or outside of a prison.”*

–Elaine Lord, retired Superintendent, Bedford Hills Prison

Judy Clark, an activist with a long-standing history in the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, was arrested in October 1981 and ultimately convicted of felony murder for her involvement in the armed robbery of a Brinks truck that left a guard and two police officers dead. Judy was never accused of being one of the shooters.

Now 62 years old, and in the 31st year of her 75-year-to-life sentence, Judy is a profoundly remorseful woman who has spent the last quarter century coming to terms with her past. She says, "While my life is fueled by a hope-filled commitment to repair, I never forget that the lives lost on October 20 cannot be redeemed. I will always live with sorrow, shame, and regret for my role in their deaths." The fury that animated her youth has evolved into a palpable compassion dedicated to enriching the lives of those around her. The only way she'll ever be released from prison is if Governor Cuomo grants her clemency.

Judy’s accomplishments at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility are extraordinary: she earned a BA in Behavioral Sciences in 1990 and a MA in Psychology in 1993. Since then, she's been on the staff of the Nursery Program, where she has taught pre-natal Parenting classes for pregnant women and has been a mentor and role model to the nursery mothers who live with their babies in the prison.During the 1980s, to address the impact of the AIDS epidemic at Bedford Hills, Judy co-founded the groundbreaking ACE, an organization so effective it has been replicated at prisons across the country. She was co-editor of *Breaking the Walls of Silence: AIDS and Women in a New York State Maximum Security Prison* (Overlook Hardcover 1998). Judy also helped to rebuild a prison college program when public funding for it was eliminated in the 1990s, and, as a result, more than 100 women have been awarded Associate's or Bachelor's degrees in the past ten years. Judy continues to be an ongoing informal adviser to many of those students.Judy lives in a special volunteer unit with inmates who participate in the *Puppies Behind Bars* program. They raise and train puppies to become guide dogs for the blind, explosive detection dogs for law enforcement agencies, and service dogs for disabled people–primarily veterans. She is currently raising her seventh puppy.Judy's poetry has been published in numerous journals and *The New Yorker*, she won the 1995 PEN Prison Poetry Writing Award, and her scholarly essays have appeared in such journals as *The Prison Journal*, *Zero to Three*, and *The Women's Passover Companion: Women's Reflections on the Festival of Freedom*. For the past six years, Judy, who was raised in the tradition of radical secular Judaism, has immersed herself in religious studies and Clinical Pastoral Education and she has just completed certification as a Chaplain. The training lends a framework to her ongoing role as an informal mentor and confidante to women like herself, who are serving lengthy sentences and are trying to come to terms with their pasts and lead compassionate, fulfilling and useful lives.

Perhaps her most significant accomplishment is that, despite incarceration, Judy has been a warm, loving and influential mother to her now 31-year-old daughter, Harriet, a graduate of Stuyvesant High School, Stanford University, and the Iowa Writer's Workshop. Yet neither mother nor daughter has taken their relationship for granted. Currently a post-graduate writing fellow at Stanford, Harriet writes:

While the separation from my mother has been the major loss of my life, our relationship has always developed alongside the losses of other people, most significantly the nine children who have grown up without their fathers as a result of the crime in which my mother participated…. She has spent the last two decades working to become the mother she wants me to have, the woman she first set out to be. It is a process she initiated largely out of a responsibility to me and it is the course by which she has faced a far greater sense of responsibility and the implications of these responsibilities.

Judy’s sentence of 75 years to life is not commensurate with her secondary role in the crime. Rather, it is a result of her conduct during the trial. In contrast to many of the defendants charged in the case who were represented by attorneys and put on a defense case, Judy used the trial to defend her politics. She refused to cooperate with legal proceedings. She waived her right to an attorney, remained absent from the courtroom for most of her trial, and waived her right to appeal. At the sentencing, the Judge noted Judy’s utter lack of remorse and, commenting that she would never be rehabilitated, gave her the maximum sentence permitted by statute. In contrast, many of the other defendants connected to the crime–including those alleged to be among the shooters–received lesser sentences, have been released or are soon eligible for parole.

Certainly, there was no sign at the time of trial, or for several years after, that the woman who had gone to such lengths to project herself as an unrepentant revolutionary would transform into the woman she is today–a woman who first publicly renounced her crime in 1994 and issued a public apology to the victims in 2001. Judy Clark is a "fit subject for mercy," the requirement for clemency. She takes full responsibility for her role in the deaths of Peter Paige, Edward O’Grady and Waverly Brown and she lives every day regretting her participation in this senseless action. She has shown, by her work over the past 25 years, that she is an extraordinary woman. She has the support of hundreds of people, including the former Chairman of the New York State Board of Parole, the retired Superintendent of Bedford Hills prison, and one of the victims who testified against her at trial. Her many accomplishments, her model behavior, her efforts on behalf of other inmates, her spiritual and personal growth, her deep remorse, and the fact that she has spent more than 28 years in prison for a crime where she was not the shooter, are all reasons why Judy Clark justly deserves the extraordinary remedy, and privilege, of clemency.

For further information go to [www.judithclark.org](http://www.judithclark.org)