



13TH ANNUAL RIB COOK OFF

On September 7, over 60 people came out to the Alaska Airmen's Association to enjoy tasty ribs, beverages, and sides. We hosted 3 judges from local restaurants to choose their favorite ribs prepared by our eight chefs. The 1st place winner was Joe Charles and the People's Choice Award went to Mark Johnson. Thank you for everyone who joined us and to Turnagain Brewing for crafting and pouring the award-winning Innocence Ale.



CONTINUING THE TRADITION

Next year will be our 14th Annual Rib Cook Off Fundraiser. We always look forward to both our Spring and Fall fundraisers. These events are the highlight of every year. The opportunity to connect with our supporters and generous donors are times that we cherish. We hope to see you again next year!



BITTERSWEET CHANGE

At the event, Legal Director (and founding Executive Director) Bill Oberly formally announced his retirement. He gave us all goosebumps with a heartfelt speech reflecting on his time at AKIP and his optimism about the organization being passed over to the new Executive Director, Jory Knott. Thank you Bill for being the heart of the organization for over 16 years and for your continued support, even postponing your retirement to ensure a seamless transition.



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS & DONORS FROM THE RIB OFF



JUDGES

Heather Houck - Wildforks Catering
Sal Addonizio - Sal's New York Grill
Chris Lazaro - Spenard Roadhouse

David Brame - Guererro's Gringo Costillas
Joe Charles - Eskimo Joe BBQ
John Quinley - Guilty as Charred
Oak Ritchie - Haitian Sensation

CHEFS

Charles Spalding - 1st Place Ribs
Mark Johnson - Freedom Ribs
Jory Knott - Wribs of Habeas Porkus
Steve Smith - Compliments of the Chef

DON'T BE BORED, JOIN OUR BOARD!

AKIP is always looking to welcome people on board (okay, we'll stop). We are actively seeking members of the community to help lead our organization into the future. Our specific needs are fundraising and community outreach. If you are interested in becoming a member of the AKIP Board of Directors, please reach out to us. Or if you are interested in volunteering or interning, we would love to have you working with us! You can contact us at info@alaskainnocence.org.

A MESSAGE FROM JORY, OUR NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As many of you know, AKIP has gone through a lot of recent changes. After 16 fruitful years, our founding director, my mentor for 8 years, and my dear friend, has retired. Bill Oberly and his legacy of championing wrongfully convicted Alaskans can only be overshadowed by his wish to prevent all future wrongful convictions. It will take my whole career to try and fill his shoes, but I have already begun working on fulfilling Bill's wish.

As director, Bill helped pass DNA testing and Evidence Preservation Standards. In the same vein, following successful reforms in other states, I am targeting two of the most common causes of wrongful conviction: Eyewitness Misidentification & Incentivized/Jailhouse Witnesses. Notably, both issues contributed directly to the tragic Fairbanks Four case. As a society, we must look to the past to prevent future mistakes. Otherwise, always forward. We must take action now to prevent future wrongs.



Staff

- Jory Knott - *Executive Director*
- Katie Scoggin - *Executive Assistant*



Board of Directors

- Ann Caindec
- Amanda Henry
- Mark Johnson - *President*
- Denise Morris
- Bob Spitzfaden
- Kevin Tripp - *Secretary*
- Linda Wilson
- YOUR NAME HERE?

Volunteers

- Susan Anderson
- Barb Brink
- Rebecca Cornelius
- Suzy Hambach
- Montana Murphy
- Sarah Murtada
- Connie Quinley
- Diane Smith

I look forward to catching up with all of you at future events throughout Alaska. If you see me around, stop me to say hello. If you have any questions about AKIP or what we do, feel free to call our office or drop us an email.

Bill's door was always open.
It's my duty to do the same.
Have a wonderful holiday,

A DAY AT THE OFFICE



Shortly before our volunteers scattered like Canadian Geese for the winter, we got the gaggle together for a volunteer appreciation lunch at the office. Since most of our volunteers work remotely, it was a very rare opportunity.

We could not do what we do on an Alaskan scale without our gracious volunteers. If you are interested in donating your time to AKIP, please reach out. We can accommodate almost any skill set. From case review to scanning documents, event help to fundraising, social media to data entry, we tailor work to individual availability & comfort level.

A MESSAGE FROM BILL



Bill Oberly reflected on his 45+ year legal career at the Anchorage Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. From the many Alaskans he served to the laws he helped pass, his life & legacy is now engrained in our state's history. **We'll miss you Bill.**

I would like to thank everyone who has supported AKIP during my time here. You have all become my friends and I hope we can continue this relationship. As I look back on my time at AKIP I have been able to work with some wonderful volunteers and have met some amazing people in the Innocence Network. But most of all it has been an honor to work for the people who have entrusted their cases, their lives to the Project. I will continue to support AKIP in all ways, and hope you all do the same. See you around,

Bill

Have a Required Mandatory Deduction (RMD) from an IRA due to retirement or inheritance? Consider making a **Qualified Charitable Contribution (QCD) to AKIP!** Unlike a RMD, a QCD is tax deductible, donated directly from your IRA account. Contact your broker for details.

Jory, Katie & Bill welcomed a new staff member this Fall: **Cosmo the Office Dog!**



When he's not taking naps, Cosmo likes to fetch evidence & assist with investigations ...mostly around our feet at lunchtime.



CASEWORK

We completed written closing statements for our client, TJ Edwards. The judge now has 6 months to rule. TJ's case was a marathon. Wrongful convictions occur so much quicker than they take to correct. Our initial filing was over 5 years ago. Opening trial statements started in May of 2021.

Resilience doesn't adequately describe TJ and his family. Despite the litany of struggles, they are unshakable. Although TJ's wrongful conviction occurred over 20 years ago, they remain the kindest, most patient folks you'll ever meet. TJ is 100% innocent. He and his family deserve justice.

- We must also honor Meg Simonean for her high caliber trial work in TJ's trial. Meg and her team at Dillon & Finley donated hundreds of hours. This underscored their avid support for TJ and innocence work. Thanks to Meg, we can proudly say that AKIP's clients have received some of the very best legal representation on the planet. **Thank you Meg!**
- AKIP recently won a court order for DNA testing in another case. We are now working with the Crime Lab to test the evidence and determine actual innocence.
- We've also been working the final report of a DOJ grant for finding cases of wrongful convictions in remote/rural Alaska, especially amongst Alaska Natives. Investigations on these cases continue.



(At Left) AKIP participated in the annual Mitzvah Mall at Congregation Beth Shalom. We got to meet representatives from many other hardworking, local non-profit organizations and wonderful people from the community. Some came by to chat. Some offered to volunteer. While many gracious folks just wanted to "give the gift of giving." Thanks to everyone who stopped by. We look forward to next year's event.

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT US

-You can donate online at www.alaskainnocenceproject.org
Just click **"Support Us"**

-Or, you can use this **QR code**



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING AKIP!

Pick.Click.Give.

Pick.Click.Give. is available to Alaskans who file for their Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) online. Applicants may choose to contribute to one or more organizations in \$25 increments, up to the entire amount of the dividend. Please consider The Alaska Innocence Project as a recipient when filing your PFD.

We appreciate you - have a wonderful holiday season



MAKING MEMORIES...

TJ and Audrey Edmunds share an embrace at our June 8, 2023 event.



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