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***** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE *****

Eugene Gilyard And Lance Felder Granted New Trials - After 15 Years Of Wrongful Imprisonment

PHILADELPHIA, PA (October 8, 2013): Today, after 15 years of imprisonment for a murder neither man committed, Eugene Gilyard and Lance Felder have been awarded new trials based upon the confession of one of the true murderers. Mr. Gilyard and Mr. Felder were convicted of the senseless murder of Philadelphia shopkeeper Thomas Keal in 1998, over two years after the crime. The only evidence presented against the two men (16 at the time of the murder, 18 at the time of trial) was the testimony of witnesses who first identified them as being involved two years after the murder. In announcing her decision, Judge Rose Marie DeFino-Nastasi cited to the “extremely weak” case against the two men at trial, especially compared to the “detailed” and fully corroborated confession of one of the actual murderers.

The Pennsylvania Innocence Project worked for three years to investigate and litigate the matter for Mr. Gilyard. Hundreds of hours from the staff investigator and attorney plus similarly countless hours from dedicated law student volunteers yielded compelling evidence establishing not only Mr. Gilyard’s innocence, but the identities of the men who committed the crime. Through the work of volunteer lawyers David Rudovsky and Widener University Law Professor Jules Epstein, as well as the tireless work of former staff attorney Charlotte Whitmore, Mr. Gilyard and Mr. Felder will have the chance to – finally – earn their freedom.

“Having worked for so long, and come to know Mr. Gilyard so well, this day is truly hard won,” said Ms. Whitmore. “We have always believed that Mr. Gilyard had nothing to do with this horrible crime, and when I met with the man who actually pulled the trigger of the gun that shot the victim, I was even more convinced.”

Pennsylvania Innocence Project Legal Director Marissa Bluestine noted that this is the first case the small independently-funded non-profit organization has brought through to a hearing. With many more cases in development, the Project looks forward to greeting Mr. Gilyard upon his eventual release from his wrongful incarceration.

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