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Perlmutter Center for Legal Justice at Cardozo School of Law Celebrates Release of Bruce Bryant Following Clemency Victory

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Bruce Bryant, right, is pictured with Josh Dubin, Executive Director of The Perlmutter Center for Legal Justice at Cardozo School of Law, following his release.

It was a day of jubilation for Bruce Bryant, the first client of The Perlmutter Center for Legal Justice at Cardozo School of Law as he celebrated his release from prison on April 24th, after New York State Governor Kathy Hochul granted him clemency in December.

The Perlmutter Center for Legal Justice at Cardozo Law played a critical part in the clemency and continues to work for his exoneration. Since June of 2022 the Perlmutter Freedom Clinic worked with Steve Zeidman, Professor and Director of the Criminal Defense Clinic at CUNY School of Law, who has represented Bryant in his clemency efforts since 2019, and Elizabeth Felber of The Legal Aid Society. The team represented Bryant before the Conviction Integrity Unit in Queens.

Josh Dubin, Executive Director of The Perlmutter Center for Legal Justice at Cardozo School of Law, said, “I am absolutely thrilled for Bruce. Bruce is elated, and I have no doubt that he will rejoin society and continue to make positive contributions in criminal justice reform -- just as he has while incarcerated.”

Bryant, now 53, was convicted of murder in 1996 at 23 and served 30 years in prison. While serving a sentence of 37.5 years to life, Bryant maintained a close relationship with his family and helped other incarcerated individuals.

Bryant earned his bachelor's and associate degrees during the three decades he spent in prison and established the Civic Duty Initiative, which raised money for gun buybacks to reduce violence in communities.

Derrick Hamilton, the Deputy Director of The Perlmutter Center for Legal Justice at Cardozo Law said students were directly involved with the case and drafted presentations that were submitted to garner support for Bryant’s release.

Looking ahead, these students will continue to work to ensure his exoneration.

“There is no limit to the clinic’s ability to be a force in the criminal justice reform movement,” Hamilton said. “It’s important to provide second chances to men and women who have spent decades in prison on crimes they did not commit. Or for those who have served draconian long sentences and are no longer a threat to public safety.”