

# Proclamation

HONORING

## GIDEON v. WAINWRIGHT

**WHEREAS**, many constitutional rights that Americans have today were earned only through persistent, passionate pleas for justice; and

**WHEREAS**, at the center of a landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision that ensured equal access to appointed counsel as a fundamental right for all was an unlikely champion: Clarence Earl Gideon was a man with an eighth-grade education who ran away from home when he was in middle school and was imprisoned for nonviolent crimes early in his adult life; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1961, Mr. Gideon was charged with felonious breaking and entering in Florida and, like so many others who are charged with criminal offenses, had no money to pay for a lawyer. His request for an appointed attorney was denied because state law only permitted such appointments for indigent defendants charged with capital offenses. Having no legal assistance, Gideon was forced to represent himself at trial, where he was found guilty and was sentenced to five years in a Florida state prison. There, Mr. Gideon studied law and sent a petition to the State Supreme Court claiming his Sixth Amendment right to legal counsel was violated. The state court denied his request for relief, so Gideon wrote a letter to the U.S. Supreme Court, which accepted the case; and

**WHEREAS**, arguments began in January 1963, and on March 18, the U.S. Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice Earl Warren, ruled unanimously in favor of Mr. Gideon. The Court held that it was an “obvious truth” that “any person haled into court, who is too poor to hire a lawyer, cannot be assured a fair trial unless counsel is provided for him.” Following the decision, Mr. Gideon was granted another trial with an appointed lawyer and was acquitted of the charges; and

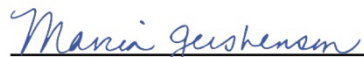
**WHEREAS**, were it not for the insistence and persistence of one man that he have access to counsel regardless of ability to pay, the estimated 82 percent of state defendants and 66 percent of federal defendants nationwide who rely on appointed counsel would not be able to claim it as an inherent and constitutional right.

**NOW THEREFORE**, David T. Woodward, Chair of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, and the entire Oakland County Board of Commissioners do hereby proclaim special recognition to the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Gideon v. Wainwright* ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court and celebrate those who have fought for justice reform, especially the dedicated defense attorneys working every day in Oakland County to provide legal services to those charged with crimes who cannot afford to pay for a lawyer.

Attested on this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of March 2023, in Pontiac, Michigan.



David T. Woodward, Chair  
Oakland County Commission



Marcia Gershenson, Vice Chair  
Oakland County Commission



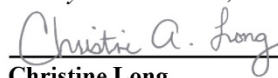
Penny Luebs  
County Commissioner, District #2



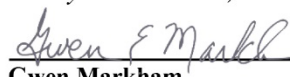
Michael Spisz  
County Commissioner, District #5



Karen Joliat  
County Commissioner, District #8



Christine Long  
County Commissioner, District #12



Gwen Markham  
County Commissioner, District #15



Janet Jackson  
County Commissioner, District #18



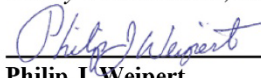
Gary R. McGillivray  
County Commissioner, District #3



Michael J. Gingell  
County Commissioner, District #6



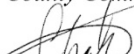
Angela Powell  
County Commissioner, District #9



Philip J. Weipert  
County Commissioner, District #13



William Miller  
County Commissioner, District #16



Charlie Cavell  
County Commissioner, District #19



Brendan Johnson  
County Commissioner, District #4



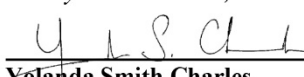
Bob Hoffman  
County Commissioner, District #7



Kristen Nelson  
County Commissioner, District #10



Ajay Raman  
County Commissioner, District #14



Yolanda Smith Charles  
County Commissioner, District #17