

Former Pro Bono Client Juan Rivera opens Barber College with Former Prison Guard

Publications

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The firm represented Juan Rivera in the third retrial of charges for the 1992 rape and murder of an 11-year-old girl. That trial resulted in conviction, and the firm assisted Stanford Law School Professor Lawrence Marshall, former director of Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law's Bluhm Legal Clinic Center on Wrongful Convictions, who briefed and argued Mr. Rivera's appeal from that conviction.

In 2011, a unanimous three-judge panel of the Illinois Appellate Court for the Second District reversed Mr. Rivera's conviction, finding insufficient evidence to support his conviction in light of the DNA evidence excluding him as the perpetrator. Years later, in 2014, authorities announced that DNA evidence from the case matched a potential suspect in a separate murder.

Earlier this year, Mr. Rivera opened Legacy Barber College, 1546 W. Howard in Chicago, with his former prison guard, Bobby Mattison. According to an article in the 49th Ward newsletter, Mr. Rivera "returned to his roots in Rogers Park to make good on a promise he struck in prison with a guard: to give back by helping youth in underserved communities carve a path towards a successful career."

The barbershop has partnered with Evanston Township High School and Oakton Community College in Des Plaines to offer alternative programs and college credits. The program also offers education on financial literacy, customer service, and how to run a business.

In addition to working with Professor Marshall, the firm partnered with the Bluhm Legal Clinic Center on Wrongful Convictions on the case. The firm team included Partners Thomas Sullivan, Terri Mascherin and Andrew Vail.

In this video, Ms. Mascherin discusses the case.

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