

# Vera Institute of Justice

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

**<https://www.vera.org/blog/the-vera-institute-of-justice-celebrates-the-life-and-mourns-the-death-of-michael-e-smith>**

## Public Facing Advocacy Writing

Mr. Smith spent two decades of his professional life at Vera, serving as director of the London office, deputy director, and then as president from 1978 to 1994. Known to be intellectually creative, unusually persuasive, and a skilled teacher, Mr. Smith took the helm of Vera from our founder, Herb Sturz, and solidified the Institutes reputation for high-quality action research. Under his leadership, Vera grew to be a leading source of evidence in shaping justice policy and nonprofit innovation. Over the course of his tenure, Vera guided a number of then-important innovations, including early experiments in holistic public defense, transitional employment for people returning from prison, community policing, and alternatives to incarceration.

Mr. Smith completed his career as the Haight-Bascom Professor of Law at the University of Wisconsin.

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