

Amistad Law Project

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://amistadlaw.org/healthcare-human-right-foderingham-v-wetzel>

Campaign and Advocacy

In 2015, Amistad Law Project began corresponding with an elderly incarcerated man named Gary Glasco. Mr. Glasco had a number of medical issues and demanded that the Department of Corrections place him in a single cell close to the infirmary for his health and safety. SCI Somerset, where he was imprisoned, refused. They placed him in solitary confinement for nearly 2 years when he refused to be double celled. We successfully advocated for Mr. Glasco to be freed from solitary confinement and for him to get additional medical treatment for his worsening health.

Tragically, in January 2016, only a few months after being released from solitary confinement, Mr. Glasco passed away. He died from complications of Hepatitis C which was not adequately treated by the Department of Corrections. In January 2018, Amistad Law Project and Abolitionist Law Center filed suit on behalf of his estate against the DOC for wrongful death. The case was settled in January 2020.

Below is a statement we wrote memorializing Gary when he died in 2016. We publish it here as a reminder that we will never stop seeking justice for those we care about behind the wall who are needlessly harmed by the carceral system.

We'll never forget you Gary and we did our best to get some semblance of justice for you.

"We are currently mourning the death of a dear friend and true fighter for justice, Gary Glasco. His death was unexpected and has left us all in a state of shock. We came to know Gary, an elderly gentleman who was imprisoned at SCI-Somerset, while he waged a campaign of direct action and advocacy in which he refused to be double-celled because of concerns for his health and safety. He demanded a single cell close to the medical department and we supported him. His struggle resulted in officials retaliating against him and isolating him in solitary confinement for 23 months in an attempt to break him.

Confined in the Restricted Housing Unit (Solitary), he was unable to speak with friends and family or access basic goods from the commissary; we were able to set up legal calls and were in regular correspondence and solidarity. We advocated directly with prison officials, acquired his medical records, consulted with a physician, prepared for the necessary next steps in his case, and most importantly forged a friendship with him across prison walls.

We were consistently inspired by his steadfast bravery to stand up and demand the dignity and care he deserved. We were constantly touched by his humility, kind nature, and vibrant personality. Recently, he had won his right to a single cell and had his phone and commissary privileges restored. Gary had spoken about telling his story as one way to continue to fight for others held captive behind prison walls. When we celebrated that victory we wrote to him, telling him that we looked forward to many years of friendship to come, but those years have been cut short and we find ourselves heartbroken and furious.

Like so many other incarcerated people and people struggling outside prison walls, Gary's medical problems would only be treated when they turned into a full-blown crisis. Healthcare is a human right and how he was treated is not only unjust, but the product of a truly inhuman society. Moreover, we know that the way Gary was treated is not unique; people are dying across this country because they can't access necessary medical care everyday. Things don't have to be this way. Gary knew it and we know it. We'll carry Gary's tenacious spirit in our hearts as we continue to fight for a world based on freedom, equality and care.

But mostly we just miss our friend who would call us up and tell us about his favorite snack--peanuts and jelly beans mixed together or about how the world we live in could be more just. We wish he was still with us. We had so much talk about that will now never be said. Gary, we will never ever forget you."

