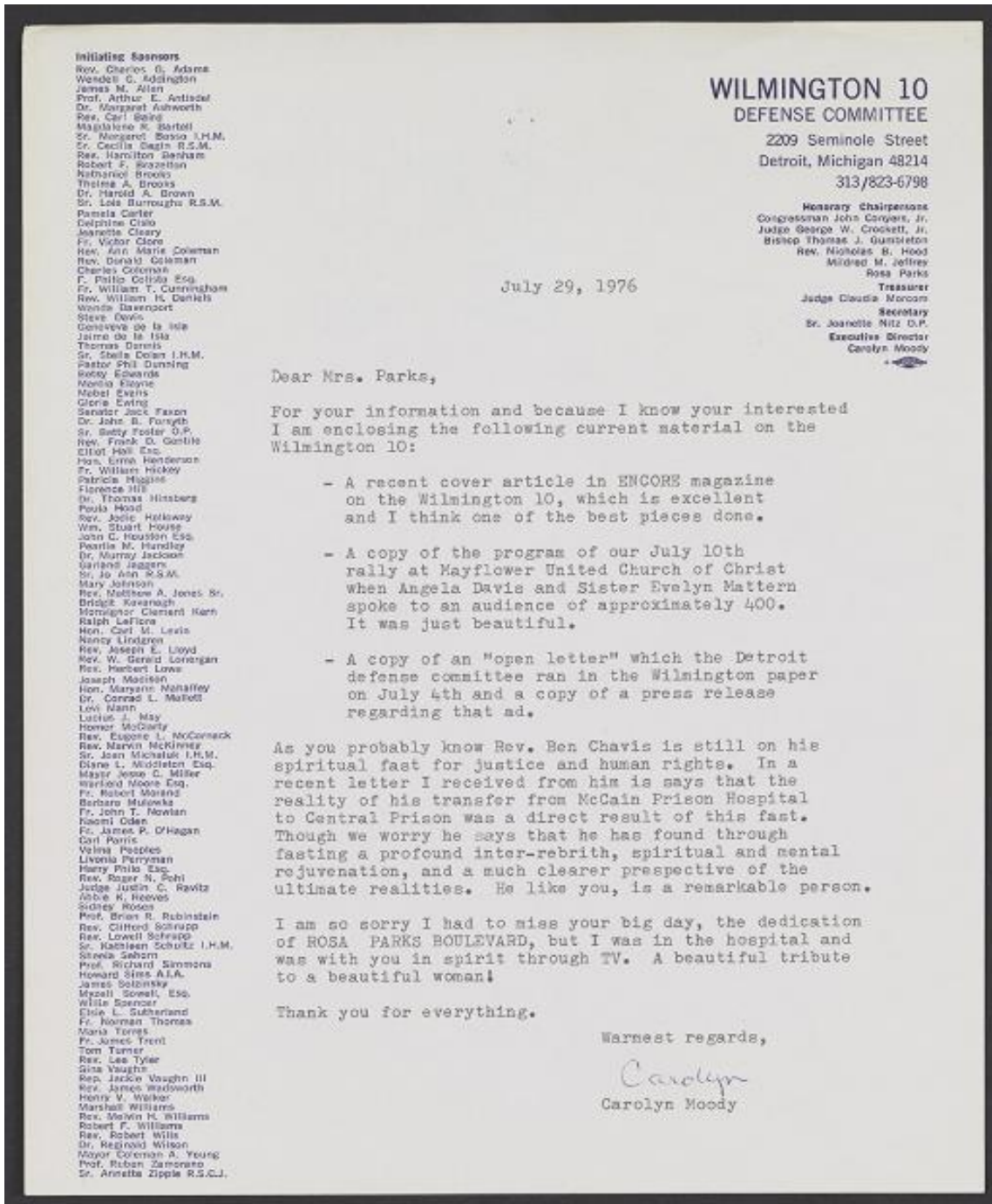


Document 1

The Wilmington 10 Defense Committee was an organization that raised money for the Wilmington 10's appeals of their convictions and raised public awareness about their case. Rosa Parks, the recipient of the below letter, was the legendary figure of the civil rights movement who prompted the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955 by refusing to give up her seat on a segregated bus. Note the roles Carolyn Moody and Rosa Parks had on the defense committee.



Source: <https://www.loc.gov/exhibitions/rosa-parks-in-her-own-words/about-this-exhibition/detroit-1957-and-beyond/the-wilmington-10-defense-committee/>

Document 2

In 1976, Amnesty International (AI) took up the Wilmington 10's case, lobbying the United States government to release the nine prisoners who were, at that time, still imprisoned. AI is an organization whose mission is to free political prisoners worldwide. Political prisoners are people imprisoned for their political beliefs, not for actual crimes. In this excerpt from the September 1977 AI newsletter, the organization expressed its reasons for calling the Wilmington 10 political prisoners.

AI URGES UNITED STATES GOVERNOR TO PARDON WILMINGTON 10

AI appealed to United States Governor James B. HUNT Jr. of North Carolina on 9 August to grant a free pardon to the group of prisoners known as the Wilmington 10, who were sentenced in 1972 to up to 34 years' imprisonment on charges of "unlawful burning" and "conspiracy to assault emergency personnel".

The charges arose from racial disturbances in Wilmington, North Carolina, in February 1971, during which a fire broke out at Mike's Grocery, a white-owned store.

The 10 people eventually convicted of this crime were Benjamin CHAVIS, Marvin PATRICK, Connie TINDALL, Jerry JACOBS, Willie Earl VEREEN, James MCKOY, Reginald EPPS, Wayne MOORE, Joe WRIGHT and Ann Shephard TURNER. All the prisoners are black, except Mrs Turner who has been released on parole. The prisoners were released on bail in 1972 and 1973, pending appeals against their convictions, but were re-imprisoned in February 1976 after the US Supreme Court refused to hear their appeals.

AI believes that the imprisonment of the Wilmington 10 is due to their political activities and their ethnic origin. AI adopted all 10 prisoners as prisoners of conscience after learning that the main prosecution witness, Allen HALL, had retracted his testimony against them and had stated that he was induced to testify falsely by promises made to him by the prosecuting authorities. Subsequently, two other prosecution witnesses—Jerome MITCHELL and Eric JUNIOUS—also retracted their testimony.

At a post-conviction hearing, which took place in Burgaw, North Carolina, in May this year, all three witnesses repeated their retractions in open court.

Bolivian lawyer Dr Luis REQUE attended the post-conviction hearing on behalf of AI. In the conclusions to his report he stated that "...there is reason to believe that the Wilmington 10 have been denied a fair trial. . . the just solution to this unfortunate situation would be for the Governor of the State of North Carolina, the Honorable James B. Hunt Jr., to grant them a pardon of innocence"□

Source: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/204000/nws210091977en.pdf>

Document 3

In 1978, reporter Wayne King published an article in The New York Times Magazine about the Wilmington 10 case. In it, King recounted the fact that the prosecution's young witnesses testified falsely against the Wilmington 10 in exchange for lenient sentences in their own cases, and in one instance, in exchange for a minibike. King also shared new evidence from an unnamed witness that exonerated Benjamin Chavis. (The following is a condensed excerpt.)

The three-month inquiry into the case of the Wilmington Ten by this magazine turned up yet another account of the incidents of the night of Feb. 6, 1971. It is the recollection of a self-professed participant in the fire fight who was never indicted. A black Wilmington man now in his mid-20s, he agreed to talk only on the condition that he would not be identified any further.

His account of what happened differs drastically from the versions of both the prosecution and the defense at the trial of the Wilmington Ten. In the first place, he denies that there ever were a "Wilmington Ten." He says that Allen Hall, eager to get his 12-year sentence reduced, "just picked [the names] from the top of his head," and that prosecutor Stroud "just hooked it up. . . . He could have had the Wilmington 50."

As for the events on the night of Feb. 6, the professed participant gave this account:

"Let me tell you what happened. They blamed Chavis for burning Mike's Grocery. Allen Hall set the fire. Yeah, Hall started the fire. It was under orders. Chavis was there but he wasn't actually there, you know? He just gave out directions and the orders were carried out.

"There were just seven of us. We firebombed about six or seven places on Castle Street. Then we set Mike's Grocery on fire. From Mike's Grocery you could crawl under houses all the way to the church. And under these two houses there were about six of us, and we had — what? — 12-gauge pump shotguns, you know? And when the firemen came, we just started shooting at them."

At one and the same time this account convicts Mr. Chavis and contradicts the principal testimony — Mr. Hall's — that sent Mr. Chavis to jail. According to this version, for instance, Mr. Chavis did not actually participate in the firebombing of Mike's Grocery, although he ordered it. Mr. Hall, on the other hand, testified that Mr. Chavis was on the scene and stood guard.

Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/1978/12/03/archives/the-case-against-the-wilmington-ten.html>

Document 4

In 1993 – 13 years after his conviction was overturned – Benjamin Chavis became executive director of the NAACP, the nation's oldest civil rights organization, founded in 1910 by both white and Black activists, including author and historian W.E.B. Du Bois, journalist Ida B. Wells, and others. In this excerpt from a Los Angeles Times interview from 1993, Chavis was asked about his experience in prison as one of the Wilmington 10.

Q: What did you learn in prison?

A: I found an inner strength. . . . I realized I was not the first African-American to be imprisoned unjustly. When they put those chains about my ankles, I would think about the chains my great-grandparents wore. . . .

But prison was not the final chapter in my life, it was a chapter. I decided not to serve time but to make time serve me. I earned a masters of divinity, *magna cum laude* from Duke University. I learned Greek and translated the New Testament. . . . I read the works of W.E.B. Du Bois, one of the founders of the NAACP, and Frederick Douglass. James Baldwin was an influence on me.

I learned there is no adversity that one goes through in life that one cannot draw some strength from. . . . That I lived through the experience — and it was an excruciating experience, particularly when I was in maximum security — is relevant. . . .

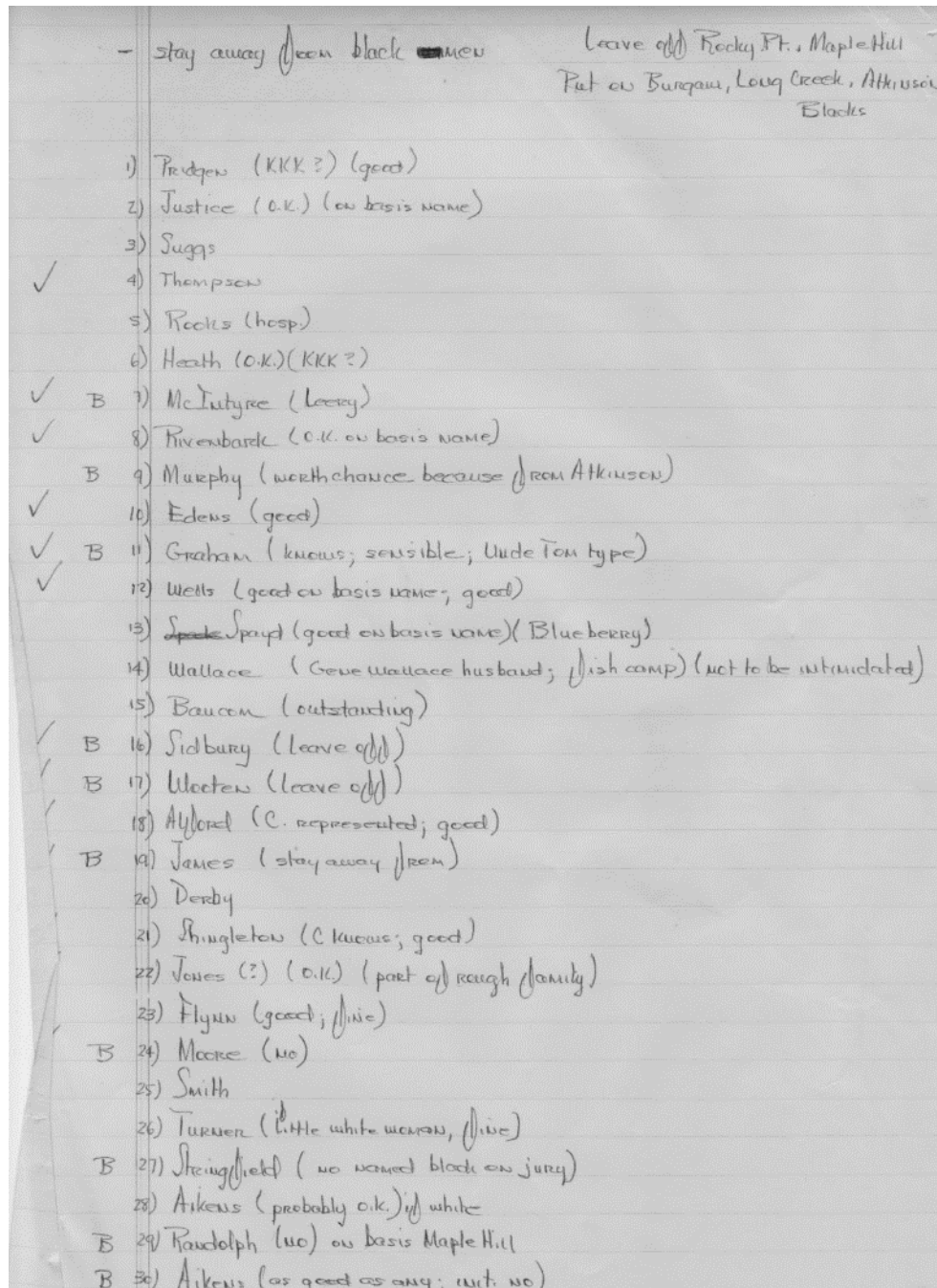
The NAACP has established chapters in prisons and correctional facilities both for men and women. Given the high rate of juvenile incarceration, we are contemplating also starting Youth Councils to help begin the constructive bridge back into society. We've found from our prison chapters that young men take a lot of pride in being part of an organization that is also on the outside. . . . To participate in the civil-rights movement, the movement for justice, gives them another reason for pride, self-worth, self-esteem. It can be a transforming experience. . . .

We're warehousing some of our best intellectual potential. This goes across racial lines, but it's particularly true for African-Americans, because we have such a high rate of incarceration. The stereotyping of inmates is something the NAACP has to challenge. . . .

Source: <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1993-04-18-op-24544-story.html>

Document 5

In 2012, files of the Wilmington 10's prosecutor James Stroud were released. In those files were Stroud's handwritten notes from the trial during jury selection. Stroud, a white man, wrote racial comments next to potential jurors' names indicating he wanted to keep white jurors as well as a Black juror he deemed an "Uncle Tom" who would convict. He marked all potential Black jurors with a capital "B." His shocking notes helped convince then-Governor Beverly Perdue of North Carolina to grant pardons to the Wilmington 10. In 2012, James Stroud defended his notes, telling the press, "Why would I want to leave a KKK on the jury?"



Source: <http://wilmingtontenpardons.blogspot.com/>