



## In This Issue

The Wisconsin Campaign to Unlock the Vote  
 EXPO Basketball Tournament  
 Mark Rice: A Passion for Equal Justice  
 Book Review  
 Raise Money for MOSES at Annual Rummage Sale!  
 Why I Am a Sustaining Member  
 Transformation Celebration Save the Date

# The Wisconsin Campaign to Unlock the Vote

By Sherry Reames

Wisdom's Transformational Justice Campaign has chosen Unlock the Vote as one of its three focus areas for the next year.

**Why this issue matters:** Most of us would agree that the right to vote is what creates a genuine democracy. It is the most basic right supposedly shared by all American citizens. At present, however, "felony disenfranchisement" laws in many states, including Wisconsin, systematically deny this right to citizens who have served their time in prison but are still on parole, probation, or extended supervision – "on paper," as people say.



The illogic and injustice of the present system is eloquently expressed by Ramiah Whiteside of EXPO: "As a directly impacted person currently on parole supervision, I am barred from voting. In fact, I will not be eligible to vote for at least another 15 years. . . . My case had nothing to do with voting. Reinstating my voting rights does not endanger the community in any way. My taxes are paid in full. My community engagement is far above average. In addition to my job, I also volunteer in the community. Even if I discovered the cure for ALL

cancer and could change water to wine, I still would not be allowed to vote."

Now multiply Ramiah's situation by more than 40,000. That's how many Wisconsin citizens – disproportionately Black or Indigenous men – are currently barred from voting because of our state's felony-disenfranchisement laws. The result is not just individual injustices, but enormous harm to the communities – largely poor and Black or brown – in which they live. With a large fraction of their population unable to make their voices heard, these communities are disproportionately deprived of political influence. The needs and wishes of their citizens are ignored, and they are forced to live with laws and budget priorities created by representatives of more privileged communities.

*Continued on page 2*

**Note:** Eugene Crisler 'El was MOSES organizer from July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022. His contract was not renewed; thus we have no Organizer's Corner in this issue. The Communications Team wishes to thank Eugene for his help with our volunteer efforts on the MOSES yearbook and newsletters.

## Executive Committee

Rachel Kincade, President  
 Saundra Brown, Vice President  
 Cindy Lovell, Secretary  
 Fawn Bilgere, Assistant Secretary  
 Pat Watson, Treasurer  
 Joan Duerst,  
 Faith Leaders Caucus

## MOSES Task Forces

Justice System Reform Initiative  
 Paul Saeman  
 Jeanie Verschay  
 Racial Justice for All Children  
 Barbie Jackson  
 Saundra Brown  
 Public Safety  
 Gloria Stevenson-McCarter  
 Pam Oliver

## WISDOM Task Forces

Post-Release  
 Prison Prevention  
 Old Law Parole  
 Conditions of Confinement

## MOSES Operational Team Leads

Communications Team  
 Margaret Irwin  
 Fundraising  
 Rachel Kincade  
 Joan Duerst  
 Member Engagement  
 Karen Julesberg

## MOSES Faith Leaders Caucus

Joan Duerst  
 Marsha Baldwridge  
 Patti La Cross

*Continued from page 1*

## How other states have eased felony voting laws:

A few states allow citizens to vote even while imprisoned. Other states have recently restored voting rights to those released from prison. In some cases they have achieved this restoration through a public referendum (Florida and California, for example), in others through a majority vote of the legislature, in at least one (Iowa) through an executive order from a Republican governor.

Restoring voting rights to formerly incarcerated citizens should not be a partisan issue, but politicians sometimes shy away from it either because they fear being perceived as “soft on crime” or because they assume that former prisoners would all vote the same way. In fact, experience in other states has shown that re-enfranchised citizens do

not all flock to the polls and vote Democratic. What does tend to happen is that having the right to vote makes them feel less isolated and more engaged in the communities they are re-entering. This is good for everybody, since engagement in the community is clearly linked with lower rates of recidivism.

**What MOSES members can do to help:** Overturning felony disenfranchisement in Wisconsin will require building a broad coalition of stakeholders who understand and care about this issue. It will not be quick. The EXPO website has a list of suggested steps for individuals and congregations, and further information is available from the ACLU and The Sentencing Project. ■

## EXPO Basketball Tournament

*By Margaret Irwin*

EXPO increased youth involvement in Madison’s Juneteenth celebration this year with the inauguration of the Juneteenth “Break the Chains” Basketball Tournament. Held on June 18 at Penn Park, the tournament included a league for 10-14-year-olds and another for 14-18-year-olds. Widely advertised in churches, community centers, and schools, the tournament drew 32 teams of seven players each.

All players received a commemorative T-shirt, and the winning teams in each league received trophies. Special guests included Bucky Badger and members of the UW and Milwaukee Bucks basketball teams. UW players led drill sessions on the half courts. EXPO members spoke on the importance of giving young people space to express themselves, through sports as well as other forms of community involvement, including voting.

This tournament fulfilled one of Eugene Crisler ‘El’s dreams. Basketball runs in his family: Eugene as a referee, and his brother as a coach, referee, and tournament host. ■

*Happy Juneteenth! L-r: Eugene Crisler ‘El, Andrea Harris, Rachel Kincaide, Debra Adkins, Bonnie Magnuson, David Lipman*



*Juneteenth Break the Chain 3on3 Winners!*

## Upcoming Meetings

**General Membership** (Hybrid format: Attend in-person or via Zoom)

- Sunday, July 10, 2:30-4:30 p.m.
- Sunday, Aug. 7, 2:30-4:30 p.m.
- Sunday, Sept. 11, 2:30-4:30 p.m.

**Leadership Board** (via Zoom)

- Saturday, July 16, 9-11 a.m.
- Saturday, Sept. 17, 9-11 a.m.

**Task Forces** (via Zoom)

- **Justice System Reform Initiative (JSRI)**, July 14 & Aug. 11, 6-7:30 p.m.
- **Public Safety**, July 21 & Aug. 18, 6-7:30 p.m.
- **Racial Justice for All Children**, July 5, Aug. 2, Sept. 6, 4-5:30 p.m.

# Returning Citizen Mark Rice: A Passion for Equal Justice

By Pam Gates

When Mark Rice talks about his work as coordinator of WISDOM's Transformational Justice Campaign, his passionate determination to overhaul the criminal-legal system is clear. He knows how he wants to go about it, and he has connections all over the state – in fact, all over the country – to help him lead us toward that goal.

Mark speaks from experience. He got involved in Wisconsin's incarceration system in his teens, mostly due to immaturity, behavioral issues, and a disabling mental condition that was diagnosed when he was in prison. Many of his troubles stemmed from family addiction and mental health issues and the trauma of dealing with them as he grew up. "These experiences played a role in the development of my fierce advocacy for changes in the system," he says, "changes such as the expansion of alternatives to incarceration, reimagining how we invest resources. The focus should be on the front end, on prevention rather than punishment. Incarceration should not be used as a solution to so many problems."

"I've always been a fighter," he adds. "Some of us [who spent time in prison] are motivated to use our righteous anger to really fight back and work for positive change."

## From the prison library to a Ph.D.

"A good thing that happened to me in prison was the opportunity to take college courses," Mark says. "I also started reading in the [prison] library, which opened up my mind. I got really interested in sociology and political science. Now I advocate for the expansion of college education in prisons; it was transformative for me. And not just technical skills training, but liberal studies, too."

Once he was out, Mark enrolled in liberal studies at MATC and then earned a bachelor's degree in human services from Upper Iowa University. After that, he enrolled in grad school at UW-Milwaukee on a full scholarship, focusing on urban studies. He worked as a research assistant in the history department, earned two master's degrees, and is finishing up his Ph.D. dissertation. The dissertation project is examining the creation and evolution of the #CLOSEmsdf campaign, which aims to depopulate and shutter the Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility (MSDF) and redirect resources to build communities. The focuses of his

dissertation are coalition dynamics and theories of community organizing.

## How did you connect with WISDOM?

"I was a grad student in Milwaukee and was interested in mass incarceration issues. I learned about WISDOM's 11x15 campaign, which to me was very exciting. I met David Liners and saw how people from different backgrounds could come together to fight for justice, and how much concern there was from a variety of people in the community. I held various leadership roles with WISDOM over the next 10 years or so [including one year as MOSES organizer], and now am coordinating the Transformational Justice campaign, which is a continuation of the 11x15 and ROC {Restore Our Communities} campaigns."



Mark Rice

## The Transformational Justice Campaign at Work

Sixty people from all over Wisconsin met on April 29 in Green Bay to lay out concrete plans for the campaign and build camaraderie. People came away pretty excited, Mark says. Some details of those plans: 1. In mid-June, the national organization Gamaliel held a weeklong training for social activists that some of the 60 attended. 2. During this national training in June, participants traveled to Racine to join local leaders for an action focused on pretrial justice and Unlock the Vote. The action lifted up the voices of local directly impacted leaders and gave participants a chance to engage with local elected officials and canvass in some of Racine's most impacted neighborhoods. 3. In July in Milwaukee, Gamaliel will hold a weeklong training for directly impacted people from throughout the nation. Faith leaders and community leaders will be brought in to attend a national transformational justice convening later in the week; "We're a unique model for this," Mark says. 4. A U.S. Senate candidates' forum will be held in Milwaukee during the national transformational justice convening. 5. Madison Action Day (April 27, 2023). 6. IVE (Integrated Voter Engagement) throughout the state. 7. A relaunch of the Transformational Justice campaign, more public than the April 29 event, to be held in Madison in early December '22.

*"I've always been a fighter," he adds. "Some of us [who spent time in prison] are motivated to use our righteous anger to really fight back and work for positive change."*

Continued on page 4



*Continued from page 3*

### What were some highlights of your time with MOSES?

“It was a positive experience getting to know so many of the leaders and getting informed on local issues. The candidates’ forums were highlights. They raised our organizational profile, lifted up the voices of impacted people, and created opportunities for engagement between public officials, directly impacted people, and community leaders. The forums are a way to get actual policy changes moving forward. Other highlights were facilitating trainings and working with the task forces.”

Mark spent his entire time as MOSES organizer dealing with COVID restrictions. “We found a way to push forward under very challenging circumstances,” he said.

### What did you do before coming to MOSES?

“I worked for JustLeadershipUSA. I was responsible for managing prison and jail closure campaigns in Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Milwaukee. I also worked closely with campaigns in New York, Michigan, Rhode Island, Georgia, and South Carolina.

“There’s a powerful network of directly impacted people all over the country, and I traveled to meet with many of them. It was a great learning experience, with a lot of success. For example, the #CLOSEmsdf campaign created the largest amount of decarceration in any adult Wisconsin prison in over 20 years: the population was cut by more than half, and it’s still down today.”

Mark notes that these reductions were accomplished through administrative policy changes, not legislation, and there’s concern that a new administration could change that. One major administrative policy change moved all of the alternatives-to-revocation treatment programs in MSDF (Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility) to community-based settings.

“Secretary Carr [DOC] told me yesterday that the community-based treatment model is working well,” Mark said. He is very pleased, because people who are in the system can stay with their families and communities and jobs and not have their lives disrupted yet again. “State budget advocacy is very important here,” he says. “TAD [treatment alternatives and diversions] needs to be expanded, as well as community-based alternatives to revocation.”

### Conclusions

“I like this job,” Mark says. “I learn so much about what’s going on in other regions, like Eau Claire and the Fox Valley. I was in Milwaukee from 2006 to 2020, so I know Milwaukee pretty well. I’m doing a lot of one-on-ones around the state and going to a lot of transformational justice meetings and will be focusing on areas that are interested in bolstering their transformational justice activities. I’m pulling people together through my connections with EXPO and WISDOM and other networks.”

Keep on keepin’ on, Mark. We’re grateful for your leadership! ■

## On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City

By Alice Goffman • The University of Chicago Press, 2014, 277 pages *Reviewed by Pam Gates*

I discovered this book in the “Too Good to Miss” section of Madison’s Central Library. It has a local connection, too: at the time of publication, Alice Goffman was an assistant professor of sociology at UW-Madison. MOSES’s own Pam Oliver is mentioned in the acknowledgements.

Alice Goffman was a young white undergrad in the U-Penn sociology department who decided, for her graduation thesis, to move into a low-income Black neighborhood in Philadelphia and document life there. The major professor who supervised her work was Dr. Elijah Anderson, an African American author of sociological works in his own right, who now teaches at Yale. In the main section of her book, Goffman details her observations dispassionately, though her life became intimately bound up with



the lives of those she was studying. She lived with several different community members and spent lots of time hanging out in others’ homes, sitting with them on their stoops, visiting them in prison or jail, and accompanying them to court. She describes the young men she lived with and among as “dipping and dodging” the police; it was their way of life. She describes the relationships these young men had with the women in their lives, mainly their mothers, girlfriends, and baby-mamas, and the relationships these women had with them.

She describes the war zone set up in the neighborhood by the police in those days of the War on Drugs, the devastation this war created in the lives of these young men and their significant others, and how people worked out ways to cope. Young men had to decide how important the birth of their baby, the funeral of a friend, or the hospitalization of a friend was to them, because the police would almost certainly be waiting at these gathering

*Continued on page 5*

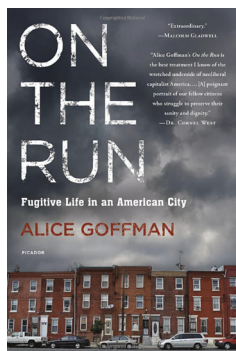
*Continued from page 4*

points to pick up people with warrants out for their arrest. These young men's lives were measured not by graduations, proms, first jobs, first car, but by warrants, arrests, imprisonments.

In the epilogue to her book, Goffman describes her personal responses to living on 6th Street in inner city Philadelphia, the same city where she herself had grown up, though in a wealthy neighborhood. She describes the suspicion with which she was sometimes viewed, by both neighborhood residents and by police, and the ways her residency on 6th Street changed her own approach to life. Her lengthy appendix, which she titles "A Methodological Note," describes how she went about her research, the difficulties that arose in an inherently difficult situation, and her efforts to overcome them. All of this is very interesting; even the footnotes are interesting!

Goffman also observes that not all the people in this neighborhood are "dirty", i.e. involved in the illegal drug trade and its accompanying problems. Forty percent of the neighborhood residents lived "clean" lives, holding decent jobs and avoiding the streets at night at pretty much all cost.

Alas, Goffman's work embroiled her in controversies that were sometimes surprisingly vicious. I decided to check the Internet to



find out if she was still at UW and was surprised to discover that *On the Run* and Goffman herself have been centers of controversy; Goffman was denied tenure by the UW and is no longer listed among its faculty. Several years ago, she took a visiting professor position at Pomona College but was made to feel unwelcome there by students questioning her research approach and her very identity in doing that research. Some contributors to a Q&A on the Internet titled "Whatever happened to Alice Goffman?" defended her work; others made ugly, mean-spirited comments that sometimes revealed a veiled racism. Goffman's book has been acclaimed by many, but also criticized by some who apparently feel she shouldn't have done what she did because she is white. In my opinion, more power to her. She told it like it is. I admired the Black folks who took the chance to trust her and even help her with her research. I admired

her tenacity in pursuing the project, and the way she could see past the crimes of drug dealing to the people who were in its thrall – appreciating them and caring about them as people. I admired her clarity of vision and was puzzled by the extreme negativity occasionally thrown at her as she insisted on crossing the divides that keep America so separated, all the while acknowledging that her whiteness kept her pretty safe in that America.

In short, I recommend *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*, by Alice Goffman. ■

## Raise Money for MOSES at Annual Rummage Sale!

**M** OSES's annual rummage sale will take place Friday, Aug. 26, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., and Saturday, Aug. 27, 9 a.m.-2:15 p.m., at St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church, 6205 University Ave., Madison. (Rain date: Sept. 2-3.) Last year we had many wonderful items and a successful sale, despite difficult circumstances. This year we have a better idea of the challenges we might face, from both the pandemic and the weather, and we're looking forward to a fun, successful event. Leftover items will be donated to St. Vinnie's and to programs supporting teens experiencing homelessness.

### How you can get involved:

- Save your items as you downsize or clean out and donate them to the sale.
- At least three drop-off times are planned for the week of Aug. 14, at St. Dunstan's.
- Help organize donated items on Thursday, Aug. 25.
- Volunteer at the sale – and recruit your friends and family to help! With this year's two-day event, we need lots of volunteers, so that no one gets burned out!
- Come and shop at the sale – you never know what treasures await you!

Bonnie Magnuson is coordinating volunteer schedules and item-drop-off times. Please contact her at [bonniemagnuson@gmail.com](mailto:bonniemagnuson@gmail.com) for details and to let her know you want to help. We are grateful to the people of St. Dunstan's congregation for their assistance again this year. ■

## Notecards for Sale

Thanks to a generous gift from James Morgan, who gave the original photo and design, MOSES now has a beautiful notecard appropriate for many occasions. The bonus is that for every \$5 card sold, a small donation is made to MOSES.

It is perfect for the special people in your life, when only a personal note will do. The cards will be available at MOSES meetings when we return to gathering in person in July.

## Why I Am a Sustaining Member

By Marsha Baldwridge

A little less than a year ago, I had no clue about who or what MOSES was about. But Sandra Brown took care of that by inviting me to a MOSES general meeting. I came and was impressed by who I saw and what I heard.

Here I am in a predominantly white group of people that are fighting for equity for the predominantly Black jail/prison population. This absolutely blew me away. There was so much I did not know about the disparities and about legislation that is not friendly to the Black prison population. I'm in a continuing learning process.

I learned that "our mission is to build collective power to dismantle the systems of mass incarceration and mass supervision and to eradicate the racial disparities in our community that contribute to them." Various task forces have been formed in order to realize our mission. I am slowly finding where I can be of the most help in carrying out the mission and vision of MOSES and have landed on the RJAC task force.

I encourage you to dig in and find where your passion lies. If you are interested, please check out the JSRI (Justice System Reform Initiative), the PSTF (Public Safety Task Force), or RJAC (Racial Justice for All Children). This link ([tinyurl.com/2p82ukyw](https://tinyurl.com/2p82ukyw)) identifies task force purposes and how they tie together:

Now let me get to the nitty-gritty of this article. Let me take a moment to tell you about its importance and what it looks like to be a sustaining member.

First of all, why are sustaining members so important to MOSES? With the exception of one paid employee, our community organizer, MOSES is made up of

volunteers who work tirelessly to carry out our mission. To carry out that mission, we need to be able to count on a guaranteed amount of money each month, to meet such expenses as printing, postage, office space rental, and office supplies, to name just a few.

Secondly, what does it mean to be a "sustaining" member of MOSES? It means making a designated monetary donation, within your budget, on a monthly basis, by check, credit card, or automatic withdrawal from your checking or savings account. I have opted for automatic withdrawal; this way, I will never forget. This is a good way to leave a legacy.

The sustainability of MOSES is key to realizing our mission and providing a legacy in Dane County that future generations can build on. I want to make a tangible difference. I need to be a part of something bigger than me. Please join me as a Sustainer! ■



Marsha Baldwridge

### How do you become a sustaining member?

It's easy! Decide how much you wish to contribute to MOSES each month (there is a \$10 monthly minimum to participate through electronic funds transfer), then download and fill out [this form](#), and mail the form with a voided check to MOSES, P.O. Box 7031, Madison, WI 53707. As an affiliate of WISDOM, MOSES shares in WISDOM's 501(c)3 status, meaning that donations to MOSES are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

### Questions?

Contact [treasurer.moses.madison@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.moses.madison@gmail.com).

### Thanks to MOSES Sponsors:







Madison Organizing in Strength, Equity, and Solidarity  
Announces the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual MOSES Transformation  
Celebration Fundraising Gala

**Saturday, November 5**

---

#### **DETAILS**

**When:** Saturday, November 5

**Where:** Brassworks (214 Waubesa Street, Madison)

**Time:** Doors open at 5:30 p.m, program starts at 7:00 p.m.

*Heavy hors d'oeuvres will be served. More details to come.*