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September 2, 2026

Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board
ATTN: Commutation
4345 N. Lincoln Blvd. Suite 1082
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Re: Stephen W. Arfstrom, #136497 – Request for Commutation

Dear Members of the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board:

The truth does not change. And every action has a consequence.

Those principles are particularly important as this Board considers the request of Stephen Arfstrom—a man who pleaded guilty to murdering twenty-three year-old Lisa Knott in January of 1984 and who now asks this Board to release him from the life sentence he received as a consequence of that crime.

I strongly urge you to deny his request.

Mr. Arfstrom does not get to rewrite what happened simply because more than forty years have passed.

He does not get to create a new version of the crime because the truth is inconvenient. He does not get to place the blame on Lisa Knott—the victim who is no longer alive to defend herself.

There Was No Single Moment. There Were Choices.

Stephen Arfstrom had countless opportunities to make different choices in January of 1984. Instead, he chose to drive approximately twelve hours round trip to rob Lisa Knott. He drove from near Kansas City, Missouri, to Woodward, Oklahoma. He had known Lisa from a previous, strained relationship. He knew she possessed valuable property that he could steal and sell. He had

previously stolen a firearm from her. He knew she had guns and money. He knew she would be an easy target.

He made a choice with every mile he traveled. Over the approximately 400-mile trip to Woodward, his purpose remained the same: **he was going to rob Lisa Knott**. He chose to continue. This was not one split-second decision. It was not an unavoidable accident. It was not something that simply “happened.” It was a series of deliberate decisions that ended with the death of a twenty-year-old woman. Now, more than forty years later, he asks this Board to pause the consequence of those decisions.

Now He Wants to Change the Past

Mr. Arfstrom wants to change the past—and with it, the truth of what happened. He wants to change what he confessed to. He wants to change the choices he made. He wants to change the actions he took. His statements to this Board are not consistent with the statements he made to investigators years ago. (see attached confession). That matters. Because this Board is not being asked to consider a crime for which there is uncertainty about who was responsible. Mr. Arfstrom pleaded guilty to First-Degree Murder. He admitted to killing Lisa Knott. The facts surrounding that crime did not disappear with the passage of time.

The truth remains the truth.

The truth is that Mr. Arfstrom was living in Missouri with his girlfriend, Lanette Todd. He had been committing burglaries while living there and planned to commit another burglary. The truth is that he told his girlfriend he was going to commit another burglary. The truth is that he drove approximately six hours to Woodward. The truth is that he entered Lisa's apartment while she was preparing to take a bath. The truth is that he attacked her. The truth is that he strangled her. The truth is that he killed her. The truth is that after killing Lisa, he did not flee in horror from what he had done. Instead, he went back to the work of stealing her possessions.

He took her television. He took her microwave. He took her bedding. He took her clothing. He took her class ring from her lifeless body. He took other property that Lisa had worked to earn. He even took makeup for his girlfriend. These details matter because they demonstrate what happened after Lisa's life had been taken. **Mr. Arfstrom continued.** He continued stealing. He continued loading Lisa's belongings into the vehicle. He continued taking her property. He continued with his plan. And Lisa never got to continue with hers.

Lisa Knott Cannot Speak for Herself

There is one person who will never have the opportunity to appear before this Board: **Lisa Knott**. She cannot tell you what she intended to do that night. She cannot explain what happened in her apartment. She cannot respond to Mr. Arfstrom's current version of events. She cannot ask you to reject the blame being placed upon her. She cannot ask you for justice. She cannot ask you to keep the sentence imposed for her murder.

She cannot do any of those things because **Stephen Arfstrom killed her**. That fact should never be lost during your consideration of his request for commutation.

This case is not merely about the man sitting before the Board asking for another chance. It is about the woman who was denied her chance to live. Lisa was twenty years old. She had a life ahead of her. She had family who loved her. She had plans, hopes, and an entire future that was taken from her.

Mr. Arfstrom's request asks this Board to focus on the decades he has lived since 1984. But Lisa does not get those decades. She does not get to grow older. She does not get to see what her life would have become. She does not get to make mistakes and learn from them. She does not get to marry, have children, pursue a career, grow old, or simply live another ordinary day. **Her sentence was death.**

The Sentence Was the Consequence

In 1984, Mr. Arfstrom pleaded guilty to Murder in the First Degree. The punishment for that offense was either death or life imprisonment. He was spared his life. In exchange for his guilty plea, he received life imprisonment. That sentence was not arbitrary. It was not imposed because of who he was. **It was imposed because of what he did.**

What he did was take the life of an innocent twenty-year-old woman. Now he asks this Board to renegotiate that consequence. But the Board should not confuse the passage of time with the passage of responsibility. Forty years does not make a murder less serious. Age does not make Lisa less dead. Good conduct in prison does not give Lisa her life back.

Good deeds after the murder do not erase the murder. Rehabilitation is important. But rehabilitation does not require the Board to pretend that the underlying crime was something it was not. A person can change without the truth changing. A person can become a better person without becoming innocent of what he did. A person can deserve recognition for positive conduct while still deserving to remain accountable for the most serious act of his life.

Do Not Reward the Rewriting of History

Perhaps the most troubling aspect of Mr. Arfstrom's request is that he now seeks to alter the narrative surrounding Lisa's murder. He cannot change the physical evidence. He cannot change his guilty plea. He cannot change the sentence. He cannot change the fact that Lisa died. He cannot give Lisa an opportunity to respond to the accusations now being made about her. What he can do is offer this Board a different story. But a different story is not necessarily a different truth. The Board should not allow the passage of time to become a vehicle for rewriting history. It should not allow the victim's inability to speak to become an advantage for the person who killed her.

I Ask You to Hear What Lisa Can't Say Herself

There is a reason I love being a prosecutor. It is because prosecutors have the privilege—and the responsibility—to fight for people who cannot fight for themselves. Today, Lisa Knott cannot stand before you. **So I will.**

I ask this Board to remember that this case began with a choice made by Stephen Arfstrom. He chose to travel to Woodward. He chose to enter Lisa's apartment. He chose to steal. He chose to attack her. He chose to strangle her. He chose to leave her lifeless body in a bathtub. He chose to continue stealing her belongings after she was dead. And eventually, he chose to plead guilty to First-Degree Murder and accept a life sentence. Those were his choices. **A life sentence is the consequence of those choices.**

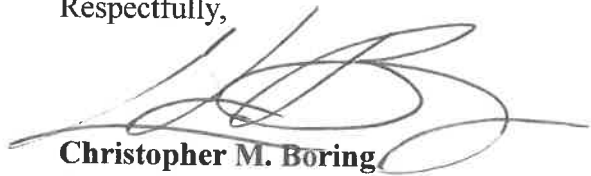
He had opportunities to stop, and make a better choices. He did not. Now he asks you to pause his consequences. He wants to rewrite the story. He cannot. What we have is the truth, and what we have is justice.

On behalf of the State of Oklahoma, the Woodward community, Lisa Knott, and her family, I respectfully but unequivocally urge this Board to **DENY Stephen Arfstrom's request for commutation.**

Do not allow the passage of time to diminish the value of Lisa's life. Do not allow good conduct to erase the gravity of murder. Do not allow the defendant's new version of events to replace the truth. Do not allow Lisa's silence to become an opportunity for the person who killed her to escape the consequences of his actions. Stephen Arfstrom has already received the consequence that the law provided for taking Lisa Knott's life.

I ask you to leave that consequence in place.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "C. Boring", with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Christopher M. Boring
District Attorney