

# Robert A. Gattis

## A Case for Clemency

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### Case Background

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Robert Allen Gattis is a Delaware death row inmate scheduled to be executed on January 20, 2012.

His case for clemency is compelling and has inspired the support of politicians, mental health professionals, members of the clergy, judges, and lawyers in the State of Delaware. [Click here](#) to see the prominent supporters of clemency.

*To show your support for clemency for Robert Gattis, sign the online petition [here](#).*

*For more information, please contact: [Robert.Gattis@gmail.com](mailto:Robert.Gattis@gmail.com).*

Business Name	Robert Gattis	Category	Legal & Financial>Legal Services>Lawyers & Legal Advisors>Criminal
Contact Information	Philadelphia, PA 19106 215-928-0520	Business Profile	<a href="http://business.intuit.com/directory/info-robert-gattis-philadelphia.pa">http://business.intuit.com/directory/info-robert-gattis-philadelphia.pa</a>
Info		Rating	

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Read the full petition here: [Petition for Clemency](#)

Below is a summary of the main arguments in the Clemency Petition to be presented to Governor Markell of Delaware. Please click on the video links next to each argument to see and hear some of the witnesses who attest to these facts.

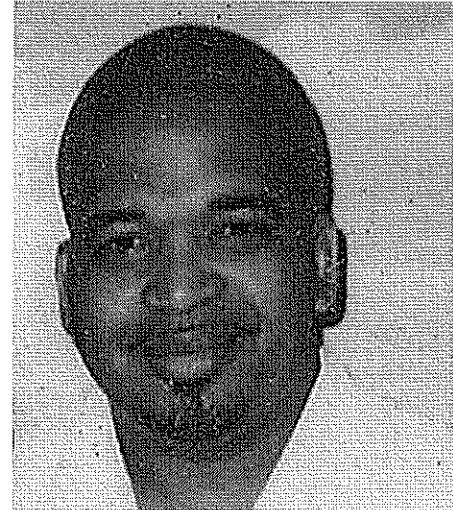
### A Childhood of Catastrophic Abuse

Unimaginable sexual and physical abuse were facts of Robert Gattis's childhood and adolescence. As a child, he was raped and otherwise sexually molested by a series of perpetrators beginning at an age so young it is disturbing to consider. The acts were often violent, and many occurred when he was left in the "care" of close family members who had no interest or ability to protect him. Mr. Gattis was also brutalized by the men in his mother's life. His step-father was a violent drunk with little regard for a child not his own. Mr. Gattis's natural father abused his son just as severely as the step-father, and repeatedly abandoned Mr. Gattis and his mother for long periods of time. Mr. Gattis was still a small child when he began to show the predictable signs of emotional distress stemming from this abuse, but he was provided no protection or help. His horrifying childhood experiences had a profound psychological impact, influenced the course of his life, and shed critical light on the person Mr. Gattis was when he killed Ms. Slay.

Mr. Gattis's killing of Ms. Slay, which occurred over twenty-one years ago, was a senseless act, very much informed by his mental illness. At that time, Mr. Gattis had been involved with Ms. Slay in a romantic relationship for almost six years. On the day of her death, inside of her apartment, they had an argument which began when Mr. Gattis accused her of seeing another man. Enraged and jealous, he struck her repeatedly, and then left the apartment. Ms. Slay called the police. While an officer was there, Mr. Gattis phoned, and the officer told him not to return. He did return, however, kicked open Ms. Slay's door, and shot and killed her.

There is no excuse or justification for Mr. Gattis's crime. Yet the horrific sexual and physical abuse he suffered provides insight into the impairment of the man who committed that crime. In Delaware we have recently learned, to our shock and sorrow, that undetected childhood sexual and physical abuse is widespread. Our state has begun to provide services to victims and training to those who come into frequent contact with our children. We do so because we now know that without intervention, the effects of prolonged childhood sexual abuse are long-lasting, and profoundly disruptive of its victims' abilities to function in intimate relationships. Robert Gattis never received any such intervention. He was at the mercy of his abusers from preschool to adolescence. His many abusers included trusted family members who took advantage of him while no one – not a parent, not a teacher, not a doctor or clergy person – came to his aid. Much of this abuse occurred on our watch, as he passed through our schools virtually unnoticed, without meaningful intervention.

[Crucial Life History Never Presented to Jury or Judge](#)



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This crucial life history information was never presented to Mr. Gattis's sentencing judge or jury. Recently, the governors of Ohio and Oklahoma have exercised grace on behalf of other inmates facing the death penalty. The stories of these cases share a common thread with that of Robert Gattis, in that deeply troubling information about the tragic lives of these individuals came to light long after their original trials. One governor (Governor John Kasich of Ohio), in language that echoes the terror of Mr. Gattis's life, found that as a child the condemned "was destined for disaster," having "suffered uniquely severe and sustained verbal, physical and sexual abuse from those who should have loved him." Mr. Gattis, too, was destined for disaster considering his background.

Mr. Gattis is Deeply Remorseful

There is another reason Mr. Gattis is deserving of mercy. Despite his horrifying background, during the twenty-one and a half years of his incarceration following his death sentence, he has demonstrated the determination and strength of character to redeem and rehabilitate himself. At forty-nine he is a different person from the man who killed Ms. Slay. He is a beloved and involved father, uncle, friend and mentor. People close to Mr. Gattis, including corrections officials, report that his expressions of remorse and contrition for Ms. Slay's death have been consistent and sincere.

Corrections Officials Attest to Mr. Gattis's Redemption

Several former Delaware state correctional officers have attested to Mr. Gattis's character and the positive influence he has played in the lives of other inmates.

Mr. Gattis Continues to Make a Positive Impact on the Next Generation

His two sons, successful and thoughtful young men, have strong and enduring relationships with him. They and their young families draw strength from his active presence in their lives. Over the years of his incarceration, through letters, visits and telephone calls, Mr. Gattis has counseled them not to repeat the mistakes that he has made. He has provided similar mentoring and guidance to other young people, including inmates, nieces and nephews, who also attest to the positive influence he has had over them.

*The act of clemency is recognition that even among the condemned there are those who need not be removed from the human community. Mr. Gattis's commitment to redemption for his act has been demonstrably genuine, and his subsequent contribution to the human community has been positive.*

*For all of these many reasons and more, we are urging the Board of Pardons to recommend and Governor Markell to grant clemency to Mr. Gattis and commute his sentence to life in prison without the possibility of parole.*

Business Name	Robert Gattis	Category	Legal & Financial>Legal Services>Lawyers & Legal Advisors>Criminal
Contact Information	Philadelphia, PA 19106 215-928-0520	Business Profile	<a href="http://business.infol.com/directory/info-robert-gattis-philadelphia.pa">http://business.infol.com/directory/info-robert-gattis-philadelphia.pa</a>
Info		Rating	

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### Letters of Support

[Letter from Former Judges and Prosecutors](#)

[Letter from Members of the Clergy](#)

[Letter from Mental Health Professionals](#)

[Letter from Delaware State Senators and Representatives](#)

[Letter from Sue Osthoff of the National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women](#)

[Letter from Stephen Orlofsky, Partner, Blank Rome LLP, Judge \(1996-2003\), Magistrate Judge \(1976-1980\), United States District Court for the District of New Jersey](#)

[Letter from Judge Edward N. Cahn, Former Chief Judge of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania](#)

[Letter from Dr. Steven Berkowitz, Associate Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania and Director of the Penn Center for Youth and Family Trauma Response and Recovery](#)

[Letter from Christine Azar, Esq., Partner, Labaton Sucharow LLP, Wilmington, DE](#)

[Letter from Kathleen MacRae, ACLU of Delaware](#)

[Letter from James Lafferty, Mental Health Professional in Delaware](#)

[Letter from Sister Maureen Paul Turlish SNDdeN, Advocate for Victims & Legislative Reform](#)

[Letter from Ruth Lawson Kirk providing written testimony to Board of Pardons](#)

[Letter from Ruth Lawson Kirk, Rector of Christ Church Christiana Hundred Greenville, Wilmington, Delaware](#)

[Letter from Rabbi Yair D. Robinson Senior Rabbi, Congregation Beth Emeth, Wilmington, DE](#)

[Letter from Rabbi Peter Grumbacher, Congregation Beth Emeth, Wilmington, DE](#)

[Letter from Brendan O'Neill, Public Defender of Delaware, on behalf of Delaware Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers](#)

*Some of the prominent letter-signers in support of clemency:*

To sign on to one of the above group support letters, please e-mail [Jenna\\_Rosania@fd.org](mailto:Jenna_Rosania@fd.org).

[Public Policy Leaders](#)



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Helene M. Keeley, State Representative, 3rd District

Karen Peterson, State Senator, 9th District

George Smiley, New Castle County City Council, 7th District

Melanie George Smith, State Representative, 5th District

Leane M. Sorenson, State Senator, 6th District

Sue Osthoff, Director, National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women

Former Judges and Prosecutors

Adam Balick  
Balick & Balick, LLC  
Deputy Attorney General – Criminal Division, Delaware Department of Justice (1989-1995)

Walter S. Batty, Jr.  
Assistant United States Attorney (1971-2003), United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Edward N. Cahn  
Of Counsel, Blank Rome LLP  
Chief Judge (1993-1998), Judge (1974-1993), United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Daniel J. Carluccio  
Partner, Carluccio, Leone, Dimon, Doyle, and Sachs  
Prosecutor of Ocean County, New Jersey (1992-1997)

Robert J. Cindrich  
Judge (1994-2004), United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania  
United States Attorney (1978-1981), Western District of Pennsylvania

Robert Del Tufo  
Attorney General of the State of New Jersey (1990-1993)  
United States Attorney for the District of New Jersey (1977-1980)

John J. Gibbons  
Director, Gibbons P.C.  
Chief Judge (1987-1990), Judge (1969-1987), United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit

James T. Giles  
Chief Judge (1999-2006), Judge (1980-1999, 2006-2008), United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Scott D. Godshall  
Of Counsel, Eckell, Sparks, Levy, Auerbach, Monte, Sloane, Matthews & Auslander, P.C.  
Assistant United States Attorney (1990-1993), United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Alan B. Handler  
Associate Justice (1977-1999), Supreme Court of New Jersey

Henry E. Hockeimer, Jr.  
Assistant United States Attorney (1995-2000), United States Attorney's Office for the Western District of Oklahoma

Nathaniel R. Jones  
Of Counsel, Blank Rome LLP  
Judge (1979-2002), United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit

John Kaye  
Prosecutor of Monmouth County, New Jersey (1983-2006)  
President, National District Attorney's Association (1996)

Thomas F. Kelaher  
Mayor, Toms River, New Jersey  
Prosecutor of Ocean County, New Jersey (2002-2007)

Gerald Kogan  
Chief Justice, Supreme Court of the State of Florida  
Chief Prosecutor, Homicide and Capital Crimes Division, Dade County, Florida

Ronald H. Levine  
Principal, Post and Schell, P.C.  
Former Chief-Criminal Division (1998-2002), United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Jack McMahon  
Assistant District Attorney, (1978-1990), Homicide Unit (1982-1990), Philadelphia District Attorney's Office

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Partner, ImpactNJ, LLC  
Prosecutor of Morris County, New Jersey (1990-1995)

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Judge (1996-2003), Magistrate Judge (1976-1980), United States District Court for the District of New Jersey

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Attorney General of the State of New Jersey (1994-1996)

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Partner, Raymond, Coleman, Heindl, LLC  
Prosecutor of Burlington County, New Jersey (1982-1997)

Carl Schnee  
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Assistant United States Attorney (1990-2004), United States Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey

Alfred M. Wolin  
Judge (1987-2004), Senior Judge (2000-2004), United States District Court for the District of New Jersey  
Presiding Judge (1983-1987), Judge -- Civil Division (1982-1983), Judge -- Juvenile and Domestic Relations Division (1980-1982), Superior Court of New Jersey  
Judge (1980-1985), Union County District Court

James R. Zazzali  
Chief Justice (2006-2007), Associate Justice (2000-2006), Supreme Court of New Jersey

#### Members of the Clergy

Rev. David J. Archibald  
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Pastor Ronald Bergman  
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Rev. Dr. Christopher Bullock  
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St. Elizabeth Parish  
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Rev. Norman Carroll  
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The Rev. Canon Lloyd S. Casson  
Rector Emeritus, Episcopal Church of Sts. Andrew & Matthew  
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The Rev. Dr. George Clifford  
Retired Priest, Episcopal Church  
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Bebe Ross Coker

Elder Charles H. Collier, III  
First Presbyterian Church  
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Rev. Dr. Christopher T. Curry  
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Rev. Beth Doty  
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Thomas Ledbetter  
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Rev. David J. Morris  
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Bishop Aretha E. Morton  
Tabernacle Full Gospel Baptist Cathedral  
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Rev. Dr. Donald Morton  
Lead Pastor, Perfected Life Church  
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Rev. James L. Moseley  
Executive Presbyter, New Castle Presbytery  
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The Rev. Culver L. Mowers  
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The Rev. Rita P. Nelson



The Rev. Fred E. Nelson  
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<b>Info</b>		<b>Rating</b>	

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### Press Releases

[1/5/12: More than Two Dozen Former Judges and Prosecutors, 73 Faith Leaders, and Numerous Mental Health and Legal Professionals Call on Delaware Board of Pardons and Governor Markell to Grant Clemency to Robert Gattis](#)

[1/3/12: Robert Gattis Petitions Delaware Board of Pardons for Clemency](#)

### In the News

## [BREAKING NEWS: GOVERNOR MARKELL HAS GRANTED CLEMENCY AND COMMUTED ROBERT GATTIS'S SENTENCE TO LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE](#)

### [Governor Markell's Statement Regarding the Commutation of Sentence of Robert Gattis](#)

[Doubts increase about death penalty, by Sean O'Sullivan, News Journal, 1/17/12](#)

[Gattis' past left him unable to think clearly, Letter the Editor by the Rev. E. Perren Hayes, News Journal, 1/16/12](#)

[Pardons board is right to recommend clemency, Editorial, News Journal, 1/16/12](#)

[Del. Pardons Board recommends clemency for Robert A. Gattis, by Jennifer Hayes, Dover Post, 1/15/12](#)

[Board of Pardons Votes to Spare Convicted Killer, by Sean O'Sullivan, News Journal, 1/16/12](#)

[Abuse Gattis suffered argues for clemency, by Sister Maureen Paul Turlish, Letter to the Editor, News Journal, 1/13/12](#)

[Death row inmate Gattis seeks reprieve: This 'is not who I am' by Sean O'Sullivan, News Journal, 1/10/12](#)

[Gattis' execution would only shatter more lives, by Kristin Froelich, Letter to the Editor, News Journal, 1/9/12](#)

[Condemned killer asks Delaware Board of Pardons to spare his life, by Mark Fowser, Newsworks by WHY?, 1/9/12](#)

[Gattis's Abusive Childhood Should be Considered, Letter to the Editor, by Bishop Arethra E. Morton, News Journal, 1/7/12](#)

[Weigh all aspects of execution case, Editorial, News Journal, 1/7/12](#)

[Gattis Defense Lawyer Argues for Sentence Commutation, WDEL Radio, Frank Gerace, 1/5/12](#)

[With a horrific childhood, Gattis should not die, by Connie Kreshtool, News Journal, Letter to the Editor: With a horrific childhood, Gattis should not die, by Connie Kreshtool, News Journal, 1/5/12](#)

[One condemned Delaware inmate fights execution; another removed from](#)



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One condemned Delaware inmate rights execution, another removed from death row, Newsworks by WHYY, by Mark Fowser, 1/4/12

Del. convicted killer facing Jan. 20 execution files clemency petition with Board of Pardons, by Randall Chase, Associated Press, 1/3/12

Voice of the Victims must be heard, Op-ed by John Giugliano, News Journal, 12/21/11.

<b>Business Name</b>	Robert Gattis	<b>Category</b>	Legal & Financial>Legal Services>Lawyers & Legal Advisors>Criminal
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<b>Info</b>		<b>Rating</b>	

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*For inquiries related to the press, please e-mail:*  
[Laura.Burstein@ssd.com](mailto:Laura.Burstein@ssd.com)

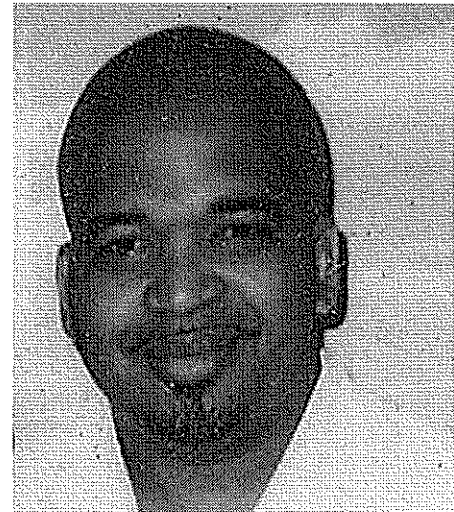
*To sign-on to a letter of support as a former judge or prosecutor, member of the clergy, or mental health professional, please e-mail:*  
[Jenna.Rosania@fd.org](mailto:Jenna.Rosania@fd.org)

To sign the online petition in support of clemency for Robert Gattis, click [here](#).

To write a letter in support of clemency to the Governor of Delaware, mail or fax it to:

Governor Jack Markell  
Tatnall Building  
William Penn Street, 2nd Fl.  
Dover, DE 19901

Fax: (302) 739-2775



Robert Allen Gattis is a Delaware death row inmate scheduled to be executed on January 20, 2012.

His case for clemency is compelling and has inspired the support of politicians, mental health professionals, members of the clergy, judges, and lawyers in the State of Delaware. Click [here](#) to see the prominent supporters of clemency.

*To show your support for clemency for Robert Gattis, sign the online petition [here](#).*

*For more information, please contact:*  
[Robert.Gattis@gmail.com](mailto:Robert.Gattis@gmail.com).

<b>Business Name</b>	Robert Gattis	<b>Category</b>	Legal & Financial>Legal Services>Lawyers & Legal Advisors>Criminal
<b>Contact Information</b>	Philadelphia, PA 19108 215-929-0520	<b>Business Profile</b>	<a href="http://business.inbit.com/directory/info-robert-gattis-philadelphia.pa">http://business.inbit.com/directory/info-robert-gattis-philadelphia.pa</a>
<b>Info</b>		<b>Rating</b>	