

# North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission Refers State v. Clarence Roberts for Hearing



COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE  
MEDIA@NCCOURTS.ORG  
PO BOX 2448, RALEIGH, NC 27602

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***A panel of three superior court judges will be appointed to hear the case in Robeson County.***



RALEIGH — On August 15-17, 2023, the [North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission](#) (NCIIC) held a hearing in State v. Clarence Roberts, 13 CRS 054359 (Robeson County). The case arises from the murder of Joshua Council on June 14, 2013. On May 5, 2017, Clarence Roberts was convicted, after a jury trial, of second-degree murder.

During the hearing, NCIIC Executive Director Lindsey Guice Smith presented the case to the Commissioners. The Commission's lead investigators on this case were Staff Attorneys Mackenzie Myers and Taylor Miller. After carefully considering the evidence, the Commission concluded by a vote of 6-2 that there was sufficient evidence of factual innocence to merit judicial review and the case was referred forward for a hearing before a three-judge panel. [Chief Justice Paul Newby](#) will appoint a panel of three superior court judges to hear the case in [Robeson County](#).

#### **About North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission**

The North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission is a state agency charged with investigating post-conviction claims of factual innocence. The agency was created by the General Assembly in 2006 and began operations in 2007. The Commission is the first and only of its kind in the country. Since 2007, over 3500 claims have been submitted and review by the Commission. The Commission has held 19 hearings. Fifteen individuals have been exonerated as a result of the Commission's investigations.

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#### **About North Carolina Judicial Branch**

The [North Carolina Judicial Branch](#) is an equal and distinctively separate branch and core function of government. More than 7,000 Judicial Branch employees statewide administer justice in courthouses in North Carolina's 100 counties.

The [Judicial Branch budget for FY 2021-22](#) was \$672.4M, 86.2% of which is used to pay salaries and the remaining 13.8% is used for operations. The Judicial Branch receives only 2.59% of the overall State budget.

#### **About North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts**

The North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts (NCAOC) is the administrative agency for the [North Carolina Judicial Branch](#), providing administrative services to help the North Carolina court system operate more efficiently and effectively, taking into account each courthouse's diverse needs, caseloads, and available resources.

#### **Media Contact**

[Lindsey Guice Smith](#)

919-890-1580

NCIIC Executive Director



North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts  
901 Corporate Center Drive, Raleigh, NC 27607  
919-890-1000 | [www.NCcourts.gov](http://www.NCcourts.gov)