

## The Death Penalty in Harris County

(As of October 1, 2017)

- While Harris County is **Texas' top sentencing county**, it has not imposed any new death sentences since 2014.
- Overall, Harris County prosecutors have secured **death sentences for 294 people** since 1974.
- There are more than 80 inmates still on death row who were convicted in Harris County; this constitutes **more than one-third of the current Texas death row population**.
- In the mid-1990's, Harris County juries **typically sent 13-15 people to death row each year**.
- **15 of the last 18 defendants sentenced to death in Harris County are African American** – the other three defendants are Hispanic. The last death sentence imposed on a white defendant in Harris County occurred in November 2004.
- In the 1990's, the Harris County District Attorney's Office was over **three times more likely** to seek the death penalty against African American defendants than similarly situated white defendants.
- Harris County accounts for 127 executions since 1982, **more than any state in the country besides Texas** and twice as many as any other county.
- Since 1973, **159 individuals** – including 13 people in Texas – have been released from death rows nationwide due to evidence of their wrongful conviction. On June 8, 2015, the Harris County District Attorney's Office dismissed capital murder charges against **Alfred Dewayne Brown** after determining there was insufficient evidence to support another conviction. Brown spent a decade on death row as an innocent man. Prosecutors had withheld important phone records that corroborated his alibi. Brown is the third death row exonoree out of Harris County.
- According to the **Houston Area Survey for 2016**, conducted by the Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University, **just 27 percent** of respondents think the death penalty, rather than life imprisonment, is the most appropriate punishment for murder.