



Connecticut Board of Pardons and Paroles
55 West Main Street, Suite 520
Waterbury, CT 06702

Dear Board of Pardons and Paroles,

My name is Rev. Dr. Shelley D. Best and for the last 10 years I have served as the President & CEO of The Conference of Churches located in Hartford, Connecticut. The Conference of Churches serves a network of over 1000 faith communities in the greater Hartford Region and beyond. Through my leadership with The Conference of Churches, we have established The Connecticut Office of Faithbased and Neighborhood Partnerships which works with The White House as a liaison for national faith-based programs and services. Through our work in this capacity, we have created the nationally recognized FaithWorks Community Development Leadership Institute which has increased the leadership capacity of over 70 organizations throughout Connecticut with a charge to help some of this state's most distressed families and neighborhoods.

In addition, I have been a minister in the A.M.E. Zion Church for the last 22 years and prior to my service in full time ministry, I was employed with The Connecticut Department of Children and Families for eight years. In my first position with DCF, I served as Assistant Regional Director of Programs for the Waterbury, Torrington and Danbury Region. In that role I was responsible for funding and program development of which one of my greatest accomplishments was the establishment of the Family Services Division of New Opportunities for Waterbury. It was through that work that I first came to know and respect Dr. Ernest Garlington.

With all this in mind, I am writing to request the Board of Pardons and Paroles grant clemency to Dr. Ernest Garlington, with particular attention to the new criteria which focuses on, *"the conduct of the offender following the conviction describing the specific reasons why clemency is appropriate, knowing that the applicant must describe and submit evidence of specific extraordinary circumstances or specific exemplary conduct supporting the request for Clemency."*

The Conference of Churches' mission is "to engage transformational leaders to create a healthy and just community." Dr. Ernest Garlington is exactly the kind of leader our community needs and he has demonstrated his commitment to community for several decades. When I first came to know him, I was impressed because he is an innovative thinker, he is passionately committed to uplifting those who many ignore and he increases the professionalism of every environment he serves. In addition, Dr. Ernest Garlington is a man of deep faith. While this time of his life has him behind bars, he still is the committed transformational leader I met in Waterbury.

As you are aware, Dr. Garlington has treated his time behind bars with the same level of dedication, professionalism and passion one would provide if the work they were doing was a requirement to earn a salary. Please review the programs and services he has provided to enhance the criminal justice system of Connecticut. As an expert in program development – I would appraise the value of the his three core

initiatives: Reading Between the Lines [\$2,100 supplies + \$15,000 management]; Gently Used-Children's Book Drive [10,000+ books at median price of \$10.00 = \$100,000 + \$13,000 management] the TVS Program if fully operational [500 inmates @ tuition/program value of \$500 each per year = \$250,000 + \$60,000 salary] at a total estimated value of \$459,000 for the State of Connecticut.

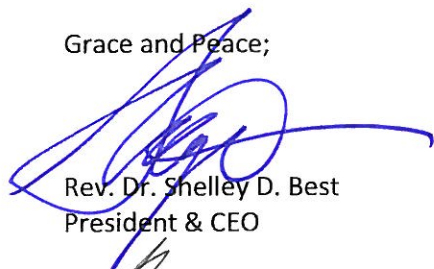
As you examine my figures, please know these are modest estimates. Clearly there are no additional overhead costs and to create these programs within a traditional state agency structure would have a far greater cost. In other words, Dr. Ernest Garlington is providing a tangible benefit to those in the Criminal Justice System of the state of Connecticut in ways not ordinarily experienced. For this reason along with others that have been outlined through the many other letters you have received -- I encourage you to consider his request for Clemency because of his exemplary conduct while behind bars. Clearly Dr. Garlington is contributing to improvements in the system and he does it with the same level of professionalism I have witnessed from him over the last 20+ years.

Without a doubt, The Connecticut Board of Pardons and Parolees encounters all types of requests on a yearly basis. Given the type of dedication and commitment Dr. Garlington has shown -- I encourage you to consider this request with attention to the greater community good. Through Dr. Garlington's experience behind bars, he has learned a great deal about himself and others and he will continue to be the type of advocate and ally for those he has encountered along the way. It is my hope you will give him an opportunity to take what he has learned to live his life making a difference on a broader scale by sharing his gifts and expertise with the world.

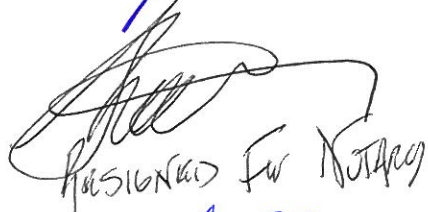
My belief in Dr. Ernest Garlington is of such -- that I am writing this letter and I am willing to help him share his story and expertise with the broader faith community of Connecticut. It is my hope to assist him with expanding and finding support for his programs as he reintegrates into the community and it is my intention to help him gain employment and further develop his programs and services for the Connecticut Department of Corrections. I am sure we can truly make a difference with this type of partnership.

In closing, I strongly encourage the Board of Pardons and Paroles to release Dr. Ernest Garlington and allow him the chance to make a bigger difference for those he will remain committed to. If you have any questions, or need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Grace and Peace;



Rev. Dr. Shelley D. Best
President & CEO



State of CT
SS: Hartford
County of Hartford
On this 15th Day of March 2012
Shelley Best Signed before me.

RYAN SHORETTE
NOTARY PUBLIC
My Commission Expires Feb. 28, 2014



NEW OPPORTUNITIES, INC.

Helping People. Changing Lives. ~ Community Action Partnership

Corporate Address:

232 North Elm Street – Waterbury, CT 06702
203.575.9799 ~ 203.755.8254 (fax)

February 18, 2012

Connecticut Board of Pardons and Paroles
55 West Main Street, Suite 520
Waterbury, CT 06702

Dear Board of Pardons and Paroles,

My name is Dr. James H. Gatling. I am the President/CEO of New Opportunities, Inc., located at 232 North Elm Street, in Waterbury Ct.

I have known Ernest Garlington for over 30 years. I have had the privilege of having Dr. Garlington work at New Opportunities as a family therapist and then as the Director of Home Based Family Services. In this capacity he oversaw our Family Preservation/Reunification Program and TFC – a Program that prepared families to become license ready for therapeutic foster care and supervising the therapists who supported the children being placed in the homes. During this time Ernest helped a large number of individuals; especially working with children to gain self confidence, pursue higher education and become productive members of society. In Waterbury, Ernest was definitely a role model for young people. He was a scholar athlete, continuing his education until such time as he had earned a PhD. The whole time I have known Ernest, he has worked with young people and their parents to motivate them.

While incarcerated, Ernest is continuing with his commitment to strengthen the relationship between a Dad and his children. Helping others regardless of his own personal situation is who Ernest is. His work while incarcerated exemplifies this personal commitment. New Opportunities, Inc. is working with him on two projects that he has brought forward while incarcerated – Reading Between the Bars, and the 1st Annual Gentle Used Child Book Drive.

I have spoken with various Correction Officers who work where Ernest is incarcerated, and the feedback is always positive regarding how Ernest is spending his time – leading Bible studies, teaching, serving as a mentor to other inmates. It is evident that Ernest made the decision to serve others while incarcerated, not just “do the time”. As a former member of the CT Board of Parole for 11 years, the work that Ernest is doing while incarcerated depicts the type of individual that we looked for when making our decision to grant parole.

I strongly urge you to grant his application for clemency.

Sincerely,

James H. Gatling
President/CEO



NEW OPPORTUNITIES, INC.

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232 North Elm Street – Waterbury, CT 06702
203.575.9799 ~ 203.755.8254 (fax)

February 21, 2012

Connecticut Board of Pardons and Paroles
55 West Main Street, Suite 520
Waterbury, CT 06702

Dear Board of Pardons and Paroles,

My name is Toni Hirst. I am the Chief Administrative Officer at New Opportunities, Inc., located at 232 North Elm Street, in Waterbury Ct.

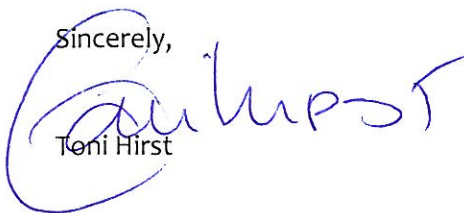
I have known Ernest Garlington for over 10 years. I have worked with Ernest while he was a family therapist, and then when he had the leadership role as Director of Home Based Family Services. In this capacity he oversaw our Family Preservation/Reunification Program and TFC – a Program that prepared families to become license ready for therapeutic foster care and supervising the therapists who supported the children being placed in the homes.

I have not been in direct communication with him while he has been incarcerated, but I have kept in communication with several people who have. I have been gratified to hear that Ernest has continued with his passion of increasing and strengthening the interpersonal skills, faith and education of those he comes into contact with.

I have been involved in the mechanics of the Reading Between Bars Initiative, and the Gently Used Book Drive for Children. Both of these activities speak directly to what I would consider a life long commitment of Ernest's' - to empower families and children. As I understand how Ernest spends his time while incarcerated, it is to help his fellow inmates gain confidence and skills to become better Dads, Uncles and Grandfathers. He coaches the men on how to interact in a positive, constructive manner. These are activities I would expect Ernest to lead and be committed to. His compassion for sustainable positive growth for families is who I know Ernest to be. This is honorable work. He chose to continue with these activities while incarcerated.

I strongly urge you to grant his application for clemency.

Sincerely,



Toni Hirst



January 19, 2012

To The Connecticut Board of Pardons and Parole:

I am writing this letter in support of Ernest Garlington's request for clemency in the state of Connecticut. The circumstances surrounding Ernie's conviction have and will continue to be a point of strong debate for years to come with varying testimony and degrees of certainty coming from both sides. However, what I can attest to without any doubt, is that Ernie Garlington has once again risen above his extremely difficult circumstances to commit himself to doing everything within his capabilities to positively impact the world around him.

I am truly inspired by his commitment, dedication and service to others. He has not allowed his incarceration to deter him from the mission he has to reach out and provide a blue print for others to grow intellectually, spiritually and socially. His efforts have impacted countless disadvantaged people prior to his incarceration and subsequently with the tremendous programs he has been able to implement while being in prison over the past four years. Although he has been separated from his friends and loved ones during this time, he has continued to spread his message of building a better society, one man at a time and has worked tirelessly to educate fellow inmates in an attempt to make them realize the potential positive things they can accomplish with their lives. The programs he has instituted are simply a reflection of a truly unique man whose passion and commitment to others has been unwavering, even in the most difficult of times.

I have attached previous letters that I had written depicting my relationship with Ernie and my belief in him as a person. I strongly urge you to grant clemency to this deserving man.

Respectfully,

Kevin Coyle
Assistant Football Coach
Cincinnati Bengals



ERIC C. BALL
Notary Public, State of Ohio
My Commission Expires 06-19-2013



October 14, 2005

To Whom It May Concern:

As both a college and professional football coach for over 28 years, I have come in contact with hundreds of student athletes. While I was coaching at Holy Cross I had the opportunity to work very closely with a young man from Waterbury Connecticut named Ernie Garlington. My opinion of Ernie and the type of individual I believe him to be are reflected in the attached letter of recommendation that I wrote for him while coaching at Syracuse back in 1991. I have had limited contact with him in recent years however he has always impressed me as a man of tremendous character and integrity.

Sincerely,

Kevin Coyle
Assistant Football Coach
Cincinnati Bengals

KC/jj

SYRACUSE FOOTBALL

Manley Field House
Syracuse, New York
13244-5020
315-443-4817

Paul Pasqua
Head Coach

February 5, 1991

To whom this may concern:

I have had the pleasure of knowing Ernie Garlington for five years and I can safely say that he is one of the most impressive young people I have ever been around! My first contact with Ernie came in 1986 when he visited Holy Cross as a potential student athlete. Over the last five years he has made a lasting impression on me as a person with tremendous character, talent, determination and personal pride.

I was very fortunate in my capacity as Ernie's coach to work directly with him for four years and see him develop into a truly outstanding young man with many talents and abilities.

He was a fine player for us, a truly gifted athlete and his untiring work ethic was a great example to his teammates. He was a strong leader on our team and he had the respect of teammates and coaches alike. He was a true "team player" with a unwavering positive attitude and he was willing to do his absolute best on the field and in the classroom. His work habits are exceptional and his dedication and willingness to learn put him in a class by himself.

He is a young man who has exhibited the strength of character needed to face and "overcome adversity" in both his personal life and athletic career. He is without a doubt one of the finest role models for young people that I know today!

Ernie Garlington possesses all of the qualities necessary to succeed - loyalty - initiative - ambition - and the willingness to work towards achieving his goals. He is a very conscientious person who handles responsibility very well. He is mature, serious about his future and determined to be successful.

I am available at any time to talk further about Ernie Garlington. He is truly an outstanding young person that will be most influential and successful in the years ahead.

Sincerely,



Kevin Coyle
Assistant Football Coach

KC:sy

Mann-Agnew Associates



*In God, Designed and Destined
For Greatness*

CT Board of Pardons and Paroles
c/o William Bumpus
210 Stonefield Drive
Unit #46
Waterbury, CT 06705

Jan 17, 2012

Dear CT Board of Pardons and Paroles:

The purpose of this letter is to express my wholehearted support for the clemency request for Dr. Earnest Garlington. As a man of character and incredible conviction, Dr. Garlington has had a profound impact on my life and the community as a whole. He is an extraordinary individual that has a way of touching the very "soul" of everyone that he comes in contact with—from the most disenfranchised to most affluent businessmen. He has a strong, but humble, spiritual approach that guides individuals to realize the best in themselves. He has an unwavering passion to design effective programs and approaches that assist masses of people to excel and maximize self empowerment. He is a devoted family man that is loved, respected and regarded as a prominent pillar in his community. Even in his incarceration, Dr Garlington has consistently gone over and beyond to design and implement projects that have a profound effect on those around him. His deeply rooted, divine drive to be a leader and social change agent is extraordinarily unique and distinctive. It is because of this that I support the request for clemency. His consistent exemplary conduct, both as an inmate and in the community speaks volumes about his commendable work and leadership.

I have known Dr. Garlington for over a decade and my connection with him has been both professional and personal. Professionally, as a college professor and social work administrator, I have had the pleasure of collaborating with Dr. Garlington on many projects designed to assist at-risk families. He has provided several trainings and consultations for my organization that resulted in more effective practice and improved client outcomes. On a personal note, he made interventions in my life on two separate occasions that were absolutely life-changing. I am a very private person; however, I will elaborate on one situation as I feel very strongly about effectively communicating the profound impact that Dr. Garlington has had on my families' life path.

On one occasion, several years ago Dr. Garlington provided crisis intervention to my latency aged-son during a very difficult time after the unexpected loss of his father. Dr Garlington was incredibly supportive and skilled at engaging my son. During several interfaces, Dr. Garlington assisted my son in working through the bereavement issues that hindered his functioning. He set goals for my son and attached incentives for expected modified behavior. Out of the goodness of his heart- He took time with my son at this crucial, pivotal point in time. His approach and technique assisted my son in stabilizing and meeting the expectations set by Dr. Garlington. As a matter of fact, my son has been so inspired that he has chosen to follow in Dr. Garlington's footsteps and redirected his passion towards academic excellence and sports. By the end of his senior year, he made All-state, All-conference and was the MVP of his HS football team. Consequently, he was offered several full football scholarships. He is now a junior benefiting from a full football scholarship at UMASS. Like Dr. Garlington he is majoring in psychology and hopes to build his profession engaging and developing programs that support at-risk youth. I am forever grateful because Dr. Garlington helped him turn his life around. He changed his paradigm of thinking by assisting him to redefine who "he is" as a young Black male and clarifying what "he could become." As stated by my son,

"Dr. Ernest Garlington has been a truly supportive and influential person in my life as long as I've known him. Every time I am around Dr. Garlington, I am inspired to do the best that I possibly can at everything. I see him as a walking example of hard work and its outcomes at its finest. Dr. Garlington has supported me from everything from my athletic career to academics. I remember times where I would speak to him about my life and where it was at the time, and it's like he said all the right things, as if he had been there before. Dr. Garlington brings the best out of everyone he is around and I think it is evident on everyone that has come into contact with him. I am sure that everyone close to him would undoubtedly agree. I would do anything in my power to help Dr. Garlington in his current situation and would not think twice about it. Dr. Garlington means so much to me and so many others and it's because of the caliber of man he is."
----- Theodore Quentin Agnew III

With that said, my family and I would like to express an unwavering support for Dr. Garlington in the request for clemency. His type of extraordinary commitment and involvement to serving and empowering people is rare and distinctive. He has had a life-changing impact on my family and so many others in his community. His consistent exemplary conduct, both as an inmate and in the community is commendable and should be recognized and considered in this endeavor.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Mann-Agnew LMSW, CSW

Paula Mann- Agnew LMSW, CSW



February 24, 2012

Connecticut Board of Pardons and Paroles
55 West Main Street, Suite 520
Waterbury, CT 06702

Dear Board of Pardons and Paroles,

My name is Alice Farrell, President and CEO of Olive Branch Clinical And Consulting Services (OBCCS). I am submitting this letter to request the Board of Pardons and Paroles grant clemency to Dr. Ernest Garlington. The desire to submit this letter was developed as I worked with Dr. Garlington on a number of projects post conviction and upon reviewing the content of the Information and Instructions for New Clemency Form, in particular, "The new criteria focus on the conduct of the offender following conviction, describing the specific reasons why clemency is appropriate. The applicant must describe and submit evidence of specific exemplary conduct supporting the request for clemency". It is my belief that Dr. Garlington's post conviction behavior is evidence of why clemency is appropriate.

I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with over nineteen years of clinical and administrative experience in the Human Services field who also holds a Juris Doctorate Degree from the University of Connecticut School of Law. In addition I am the Assistant Pastor of the Springfield Church of God of Prophecy and a published author. I have had the opportunity of working with local, national, public and private agencies, members of the faith community, state legislators, and local, state and federal funding sources. My experience involves providing clinical counseling, conducting organization assessments and supporting the development of the behavioral health and support system workforce and faith community in the areas of Eliminating Disparities across Systems, the Integration of Spirituality in Behavioral Health Care/ The Role of the Faith Community in Addressing Disparities and Cultural Competency-Proficiency and its relationship to Holistic Care and Resiliency. In addition, my work involves supporting diverse stakeholders in the development of policies and practices that impact families involved in multiple systems including the justice system, education, adult and children mental health (behavioral health and substance disorders), child welfare and disability.

As a member of the diverse work team of dedicated and committed professionals who supports his efforts, I have had the most powerful and rewarding experience working with Dr. Ernest Garlington on various projects including: "Reading Between the Bars" which was developed by Dr. Garlington and is a program for incarcerated "Fathers" and their children. Program focus - 1) Encourage and reward positive behavior by the inmates. 2) Encourage an early appreciation for books and reading by the inmate's child. 3) Strengthen the father-child bond by extending the father's voice/connection beyond the prison walls. 4) Provide a structured format allowing the father to clearly articulate his love for his child. 5) Enhance the self-esteem of the inmate's child by hearing the father's love clearly articulated. 6) Increase the probability of successful rehabilitation via the motivation of an enhanced family bond. This program is scheduled to be replicated for female inmates for Mother's Day 2012 and male inmates for Fathers Day 2012.

During each component of the process including, designing, marketing and securing of commitment through mass email to local churches, community stakeholders/civic organizations and communications with the Department of Children and Families (DCF), implementation and delivery of books during Christmas 2011, through monitoring of implementation and follow-up processes, Dr. Garlington was passionate and the following values flowed throughout his communications to the team members: They include but are not limited to ensuring programs,

policies and practices are research based, informed by the intended consumers of the services and programs, involve partnership with diverse stakeholder groups (i.e., traditional, non-traditional providers, faith-based institutions and communities, public systems,) relevant to the communities being served, culturally competent including but not limited to the categories of race and ethnicity and are impactful in terms of having projected short, intermediary and long term outcomes and are strength based/assets focused . Among others, these set of values undergird the work of the team members and continues to be the foundation from which we operate.


It is worth noting that these values are promoted within the literature in the human service as well as other fields in relation to best practices and evidenced based programming. I am very aware that they are also promoted within request for proposals by national, state, local and private foundations/grantors as I have participated on numerous grant writing projects over the years. As I worked with Dr. Garlington on this project, he demonstrated a high level of insight, attention to detail specific to the inmate population, the culture of "prison life", knowledge of research regarding prison institution, education and employment, effective strategies for reducing recidivism and increasing community tenure post discharge of inmates, understanding of the various system related barriers and challenges family members encounter during the community- reentry process, understanding of the value of providing opportunity for ongoing family bonding connection between Father and child(ren) during periods of separation and significance of partnering across systems with diverse stakeholder groups to increase the rate of success for families and ultimately communities. His insight was consistent with numerous themes I have identified within community re-entry request for proposals and father-hood initiatives related projects.

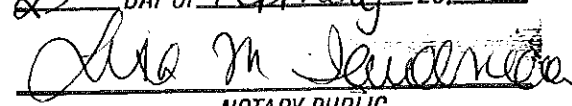
"TVS Project" - Dr. Garlington has demonstrated his commitment to working strategically in researching and documenting his findings relative to strategies for improving employment prospect for inmates returning to communities and "thereby reducing recidivism". This is a multi-level micro and macro system change project that is very involved.

1st Annual Gently-Used Children's Book Drive -This is a collaboration which developed while Dr. Garlington was incarcerated in the Cheshire Correctional Facility and involves New Opportunities, Inc., DCF, college students, and ministers within the State of Connecticut. It involves the partners conducting a gently-used children's book drive. 50% of books will be distributed to the New Opportunities, Inc. for use in the Home-Based Family Services Program. 50% will be donated to DCF for use during visits between parents and their children post-removal. Some will also be provided to children upon reunification with their parents. Again, I am honored to have had the opportunity to be involved in this project that involves DCF. Having over nineteen years of experience working with DCF in various capacity including being a grant funded provider, Co-Chair of the Hartford/West Hartford DCF supported System of Care/Community Collaborative, Co-Chair of the CT's Children Behavioral Health Advisory Council (advisory to DCF) and currently as a member of the DCF Region IV Strengthening Families Case Practice Model Implementation Team, programs such as this one is of tremendous value to our children and families.

In summary, working on Dr. Garlington's team has allowed me to have the opportunity to experience his high level of commitment and competencies which are qualities that are desirable in the human service field. I therefore encourage the members of the Board of Pardons and Paroles to grant his request for clemency.

Respectfully Submitted,


Alice Farrell, JD, LCSW, MSW
President and CEO
olivebranchclin@aol.com - olivebranchclinical.com
(860) 977-5014

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO BEFORE ME, A
NOTARY PUBLIC, IN AND FOR COUNTY OF
Hartford AND STATE OF CONNECTICUT, THIS
25th DAY OF February 2012

NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission Expires
April 30, 2016