For Immediate Release

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**Friday, August 24, 2018**

# LBPH to Host Free Teleconference with the Director of the Innocence Project Clinic.

# This event is part of the *One Maryland, One Book* reading campaign.

* Attorney Michele Nethercott, Director of the Innocence Project Clinic, will speak
* The program is hosted via Teleconference and is FREE to all Marylanders
* Particular emphasis on scientific evidence and its relationship to the wrongfully convicted

Baltimore, MD – The Maryland State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH) is excited to announce that it will host a FREE teleconference program with attorney Michele Nethercott, Director of the Innocence Project Clinic at the University of Baltimore School of Law, focusing on the role that science plays in the conviction and exoneration of defendants in criminal cases. The event, entitled *Righting Wrongs: Scientific Evidence and the Wrongfully Convicted*, is part of a larger collaborative effort with the Maryland Humanities’ *One Maryland, One Book* campaign.

The theme of the *One Maryland, One Book* campaign for 2018 is Justice, and the book selected to represent that theme is ***Bloodsworth: The True Story of the First Death Row Inmate Exonerated by DNA***. The book, originally published in 2004, is the detailed and sometimes harrowing retelling of Kurt Bloodsworth’s nearly 20-year battle to clear his name after being convicted of the rape and murder of a nine-year-old girl in 1984. He became a self-advocate and lobbied for DNA testing on the trial evidence that was used against him. Despite having been released from prison in 1993 and granted a full pardon from the governor of Maryland in 1994, Bloodsworth was not fully exonerated until 2004, when new forensic testing led to the trial and conviction of Kimberly Shay Ruffner. Bloodworth’s story has since gained widespread recognition as a prime example of justice system failure.

As part of the *One Maryland, One Book* reading campaign, the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped has invited Michele Nethercott to speak about the role science plays in helping those who have been wrongfully convicted overturn their verdicts. Ms. Nethercott is the Director of the Innocence Project Clinic and has spent her career working to help those wrongfully convicted. She received her B.A. in Economics from Sarah Lawrence College in 1980 and her J.D. from Northeastern University School of Law in 1984. She has worked as a trial attorney in the Maryland State Office of the Public Defender since 1988. In the 1990s, Ms. Nethercott took additional courses at Johns Hopkins University in molecular biology and genetics to acquire in-depth knowledge of what was then a new type of evidence being introduced to the legal system, evidence obtained by DNA testing. She is now a nationally recognized legal expert in DNA evidence and other forms of scientific evidence, having served as co-chair of the Forensic Evidence Committee for the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.

The Innocence Project Clinic, which is run through the University of Baltimore’s School of Law, “seeks to identify individuals who have been convicted in Maryland state courts of crimes they did not commit and to provide them with assistance in the investigation of their claims. In some cases, representation will be provided in post-trial litigation efforts to secure exonerations.” Law students from the Clinic work not only on cases involving DNA evidence but also on cases requiring the reinvestigation of other types of evidence. In addition to directing the Clinic, Ms. Nethercott continues to represent clients through the Maryland State Office of the Public Defender, where she persistently seeks justice for those who have been wrongfully convicted of crimes.

This program is FREE and open to all Marylanders. The program is being held via conference call and is accessible via telephone only. Program details are as follows:

October 15, 2018

6:30 PM

Call in: 515-604-9516

Access Code: 202933

RSVP not required to attend.