



BIOGRAPHY FOR ROBERT BRETT DUNHAM

Robert Dunham, an attorney and a nationally recognized expert on the death penalty, served as the Death Penalty Information Center’s Executive Director from March 2015 to January 2023. Before joining DPIC, he was one of the leading capital appellate lawyers in Pennsylvania, arguing on behalf of the Commonwealth’s death-row prisoners in its state and federal courts and in the United States Supreme Court.

During his tenure as Executive Director, DPIC produced groundbreaking reports on [execution secrecy](#) and [race and the U.S. death penalty](#), modernized its award-winning website, and assembled its [Death Penalty Census](#) of more than 9,700 death sentences imposed in the U.S. in the past fifty years— the most extensive database of its kind. The special reports and policy analyses he authored include DPIC’s annual year-end reports, its 2021 [Special Report: The Innocence Epidemic](#), and analyses on the [causes of wrongful convictions](#) and how the [use or threat of the death penalty](#) has led to wrongful capital and non-capital convictions, among numerous others.

Mr. Dunham previously served as Director of the former Pennsylvania Capital Case Resource Center from 1994 to 1999; Director of Training of the Capital Habeas Unit of the Philadelphia federal defender's office from 1999 to 2009; and as an assistant federal defender in the Harrisburg federal defender’s capital habeas unit from 2009 to 2015. He started his legal career as a litigation associate at Schnader, Harrison, Segal & Lewis in Philadelphia, where he handled his first *pro bono* capital case. He served five years as a legislative assistant to State Representative Robert W. O’Donnell, later the Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives.

Over the past thirty years, Mr. Dunham has taught in death penalty training programs offered by national, state, and local courts, bar associations, and professional organizations and spoken at numerous national and international death penalty conferences. He was an adjunct professor of law at Villanova Law School for eleven years, teaching death penalty law, and he has also taught death penalty at Temple Law School and as a visiting scholar at Oklahoma State University. He has served on the Steering Committee of the American Bar Association's Death Penalty Representation Project and on the board of directors of the Pennsylvania Innocence Project and the Pennsylvania Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, among others.

A native of Philadelphia, Mr. Dunham received his undergraduate degree from the

University of Pennsylvania, where he was a University Scholar in philosophy. He received his law degree from the Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, DC, where he served as managing editor of the Georgetown Law Journal.