

## Maurice Carter Day, 2025! Carter Released from Prison, 2004



L to R, Doug Tjapkes, Maurice Carter, Mary Blackwell

July 24. We call it Maurice Carter Day. It was on that day in 2004 that Maurice was freed from prison after having been granted clemency for medical reasons.

The photo shows

Maurice stepping into freedom without wearing shackles for the first time in 29 years. Photo credit goes to Dee Horne, wife of Jerry Horne, whose motor home provided transportation for the newly released celebrity.

This photo, which appears on the cover of Doug's book SWEET FREEDOM, was taken by a young Grand Haven Tribune reporter named Matt Tjapkes. The youngest son of Doug and Marcia Tjapkes later went on to become HFP's second CEO (we've only had three!).

The date has additional significance in that it is Matt's birthday!



The Maurice Carter/Doug Tjapkes story is not only the topic for Doug's book. It is also the plot in a stage play created by award-winning Toronto playwrights Donald Molnar and Alicia Payne, entitled JUSTICE FOR MAURICE HENRY CARTER (see story on next page), and the topic for a documentary produced by award-winning Grand Rapids filmmaker Nate Roels entitled WRONGED — THE STORY OF MAURICE CARTER.

Carter, of Gary, Indiana, had been wrongly convicted in Michigan and spent 29 years in our state prison system. He is credited with encouraging Doug to form our agency, now known as HUMANITY FOR PRISONERS, in 2001. Maurice died exactly three months after his release. HFP observes its 24th birthday next month.

***Justice dispensed without reason and compassion is no justice at all! — Thomas G. Hardy***

## From the Desk of Doug The Carter story No Longer Obscure!



Maurice Carter met relatively few people in his life.

He was born and raised in poverty in Gary, Indiana. He was arrested and wrongly convicted as a young man in

Michigan, and spent the next 29 years behind bars. After spending nearly half of his life in prison Maurice was released. But, he was so ill he died exactly three months later.

And yet, as he looks down on us today, he must be pleased! The name and the story of Maurice Carter are now significant.

- Tattered copies of my book SWEET FREEDOM, telling the story of our 10-year battle that drew international attention, still gets passed from inmate to inmate.
- A copy of the book was loaned to Mark Hartman during his 12-year stay behind bars. Mark is now the CEO of HFP!
- The book led Canadian playwrights Donald Molnar and Alicia Payne to create JUSTICE FOR MAURICE HENRY CARTER, now featured in a major Toronto theatre festival.
- Maurice's wrongful conviction led to the production of the documentary WRONGED — THE MAURICE CARTER STORY, created by Grand Rapids filmmaker Nate Roels.
- Maurice's idea of helping other prisoners in need led to the formation of HUMANITY FOR PRISONERS, which is now a key force for prisoner advocacy in the state of Michigan.

What a legacy!

***A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives. — Jackie Robinson***

— Doug Tjapkes, Founder

# Carter Drama in Toronto Theatre Festival!

## Seven Performances of the Carter/Tjapkes Story this Month

Dates for the seven performances of JUSTICE FOR MAURICE HENRY CARTER have been announced. A stellar cast will present the play in the Michael Young Theatre located in the famous Distillery District of Toronto, Ontario on: July 3, 6 p.m.; July 5, 12 p.m.; July 6, 7:15 p.m.; July 8, 1:15 p.m.; July 9, 9:45 p.m.; July 11, 7:30 p.m.; and July 13, 9:45 p.m.

Playwrights Molnar and Payne said it was a distinct honor for the drama to be featured in the Next Stage Series of the 2025 Toronto Fringe Festival.

## Little Speech. Big Payment!

HFP CEO Mark Hartman, a former HFP client, was featured in June at Fresh Coast Alliance’s Speaker of the Month series held at Muskegon Correctional Facility. Said Mark: “It was an honor



and privilege to share parts of my story, highlight the journey, and of course talk about the work of HFP while speaking to nearly 200 men inside the MCF auditorium.” The prelude to the speaking engagement was praise and worship time. Following the presentation every man lined up to shake hands with and thank the program participants. At the conclusion of the event the prisoners announced that a \$5,000 grant was being awarded to HFP from their Prisoner Benefit Fund!

## Save the Date! HFP Dinner/Film Fest

Our annual fall event is planned for Thursday, September 25, at Central Park Place in Grand Haven. Plans are in the works for a fine dinner, stimulating films, and a solitary confinement display cell. Tickets for sponsorship, dinner and program, or program only, will be sold in advance. Stay tuned!

## What We Have to Say

HFP Founder Doug Tjapkes, an award-winning broadcast journalist, isn’t writing radio editorials anymore. But he’s still writing stimulating editorials on such topics as prisons, prisoners, incarceration and injustice. Take a moment to read these thought-provoking weekly 500-word essays on our blog website: [humanityforprisoners.blogspot.com](http://humanityforprisoners.blogspot.com).

## What Others Have to Say

### Former client has high praise for HFP founder:

Doug, you’re a blessing to many people! You have done so much for so many prisoners that don't even realize what you have done. I have seen the goodness and everything you did, and it made me pray for you all the time. Thank you so much for being the person you are!

### Present client has spiritual moment behind bars:

The evening featured a good conclusion as Father Christian Tabares baptized, confirmed, and gave first Holy Communion to Brandon, the youngster I've sponsored this past year. It was the nicest ceremony I've seen in prison, with Fr. Christian taking his time and explaining each step. It isn't often everyone leaves service feeling uplifted and energized to seriously renew their commitment to Christ, but that was the conversation as we all wandered back to the units.

### This client’s vision of freedom:

In my mind, this is a glimpse at what freedom is like. No screaming, threats of violence, tales glorifying criminal exploits, trash & filth, vile stench emanating from places best left unexplored, and crushing despair that no amount of spud juice or other drug can wipe away.

