

CLIVE STAFFORD SMITH OBE

My Lord and Chancellor,

Clive Stafford Smith is a lawyer and defender of human rights who has worked for many years in the USA on behalf of prisoners facing the death penalty and those detained at Guantánamo Bay and elsewhere. He has played a leading role in exposing the use of torture and 'extraordinary rendition'. He is founder and Director of the international charity Reprieve.

Clive grew up in Cambridge and after school (Radley College) he broke with English convention to study in the United States, already driven by a visceral opposition to the use of the death penalty. His plan was to campaign through journalism; but he visited a man on death row and was appalled to find that he, and others like him, had no entitlement to a lawyer; so Clive changed direction and headed for a career in the law. He graduated first in Political Science at the University of North Carolina, and then as a *Juris Doctor* at Columbia Law School, New York, having held prestigious scholarships at both. During his vacations he worked in prisons and wrote his first book, which he promises to allow his grandchildren to read only a long time after his death.

Throughout his working life Clive has become well known internationally for his courageous and sometimes controversial defence of prisoners on death row, political detainees and victims of torture. He now has both American and British citizenship, and much of his work has been in the USA. After nine years as Staff Attorney at the Southern Center for Human Rights in Atlanta, working on death penalty cases and civil rights issues, he founded the Louisiana Capital Assistance Center. This not-for-profit law office provides representation for poor people facing the death penalty and unable to afford a lawyer (which is why Clive has never been paid by a client). He is a member of the Bar in the US Supreme Court, the State of Louisiana and various American circuit and district courts. But his main base is in the UK, at his village home near Bridport and in the charity named Reprieve, of which he is Founder and Director.

Reprieve – which has been Highly Commended in the Charity Awards for the past two years – exists to uphold the rule of law wherever it is threatened or undermined. It fights for the lives of people facing the death penalty and against other human rights violations, focusing mainly on the cases of the innocent, people who are mentally ill or learning disabled, women, racial and ethnic minorities, and all those unjustly on death row. Clive and Reprieve have a remarkable record, winning about 98 per cent of their cases in the US courts. Two examples must speak for many others: in 2001 Shareef Cousin, sentenced to death in Louisiana, had all charges dismissed on appeal and is now studying at college. And Krish Maharaj, a British citizen, was on death row in Florida for 17 years; Clive found clear evidence that he was wholly innocent and saved him from execution, but continues to fight for his freedom because, as things stand, he will be eligible for parole when he is 101.

But beyond its campaigns on individual cases, Reprieve has successfully persuaded a number of global pharmaceutical manufacturers not to supply products used in US executions. As a result only one company now does so; the others have recognised the strength of Reprieve's case, which as ever is based on extensive research and rigorous argument.

Clive's powers of advocacy have also been used to good effect in his campaigns on behalf of those detained by the United States, out of reach of the law, at Guantánamo Bay and the Bagram detention base in Afghanistan, places which he describes as 'an affront to democracy and the rule of law'. Despite much opposition, including death threats, he has succeeded in securing the release of numerous Guantánamo prisoners (including all who are British citizens), and of the 171 remaining there, 82 have been cleared for release. Clive has also taken a lead in exposing the use of 'extraordinary rendition' – 'a fancy term for kidnapping', he says – and publicising evidence of British government collaboration and 'cover-ups'. Most recently he has been telling 'home truths' to Washington about the deaths of innocent civilians, including children, in CIA drone attacks in Pakistan.

On top of his work inside the legal system, Clive has twice testified before US Congressional committees on issues of racial discrimination, human rights and the decline of America's international image. Beyond the political arena and the law courts he is also active in 'the court of public opinion', most visibly through the media, but also as a compelling platform speaker, where his distinctive combination of legal argument, moral passion and humour is often supported by his son Wilf, whose picture has launched many public addresses.

Clive's ability as an advocate – rightly described as 'peerless' – and his achievements have met with an extraordinary range of international honours. In 2000 he was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire for services to humanity; he has been a Rowntree Visionary Fellow, an Echoing Green Fellow and a Soros Senior Fellow; he is an Honorary Master of the Bench at the Middle Temple; and he has honorary degrees of five UK universities. *The Times* has ranked him sixth in its list of Britain's Most Powerful Lawyers. The Gandhi Peace Award; the International Bar Association's Human Rights Award, the Judges' Special Beacon Prize for Outstanding Philanthropic Achievement: he has received all these and more. Today Bournemouth University is glad to add its name to this highly distinguished record.

My Lord and Chancellor, I have the honour to present Clive Stafford Smith, and I ask you to confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.