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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Commissioners Court Approves District Attorney's Request to Apply for  
JEHT Foundation Grant**

*Funding would allow Conviction Integrity Unit to continue work with Innocence Project of  
Texas for two more years*

**(DALLAS – February 22, 2008)** – At Commissioners Court held on Tuesday, February 19, 2008, the Dallas County District Attorney's Office was granted approval to submit its grant proposal to the JEHT (Justice, Equality, Human dignity and Tolerance) Foundation for post-conviction DNA testing funds and for one part-time and two full-time individuals who will be employees of the Innocence Project of Texas.

"We are grateful to the Commissioners for recognizing the value of post-conviction DNA testing considering all the wrongfully-convicted Dallas County citizens who have been exonerated in recent years," said Craig Watkins, Dallas County District Attorney. "Having the opportunity to seek outside funding from organizations like the JEHT Foundation provides our Conviction Integrity Unit with the necessary resources to continue its efforts with the Innocence Project of Texas and ensures we have access to the latest DNA testing techniques."

The JEHT Foundation, established in April of 2000, has a Criminal Justice Program that has developed procedures that bring the latest research and best practices to the criminal justice system. JEHT's Criminal Justice Program focuses on three key areas:

- The period before final adjudication and disposition, when critical decisions about arrest, conviction, and sentencing are made;
- the period during which people are incarcerated, or under correctional supervision, when the decision whether to prepare people for successful re-entry into the community or simply containing and punishing them drives the agenda; and
- the period after people have left incarceration and need assistance to re-enter society and become productive members of their community.

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The DA's Office is requesting \$453,900 from the JEHT Foundation. If awarded, the financial support from the grant will be used for post-conviction DNA tests, salaries for three positions (one part-time and two full-time), three computers and travel expenses for a two-year period. The average cost for DNA testing is approximately \$5,000 per case. The DA's Office is submitting its grant application to the JEHT Foundation today.

The Innocence Project of Texas is a non-profit organization dedicated to securing the release of those wrongfully convicted of serious crimes in the State of Texas. The organization is currently working in partnership with the Dallas County District Attorney's Office to review hundreds of previously denied post-conviction requests for DNA testing filed by inmates convicted of offenses in Dallas County.

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