

The logo features a stylized DNA double helix integrated with a pair of scales of justice. Below this graphic is a large, bold number '25'. To the right of the '25' is the text 'COOLEY INNOCENCE PROJECT' in a clean, sans-serif font.

25 COOLEY
INNOCENCE
PROJECT



Partnership Opportunities

25th Anniversary Gala & "25K for Justice" Campaign

Honoring 25 Years of Justice

ABOUT THE COOLEY INNOCENCE PROJECT

In 2001, late Cooley Professor **Norman Fell** recognized a profound injustice and an opportunity to change lives. He founded the Cooley Innocence Project as a law school clinic dedicated to freeing the wrongfully convicted through DNA testing and post-conviction advocacy.

Twenty-five years later, that vision has transformed lives and strengthened the justice system:

- **10 individuals exonerated** through our direct work
- **6 additional exonerations supported** through collaboration
- **314 total years restored** to innocent men and women
- Strategic partnerships with **Conviction Integrity Units** and the **State Appellate Defender Office**
- **Hands-on legal training** for future attorneys committed to justice

The Cooley Innocence Project stands as a powerful reminder: justice is not final until it is right.

25TH ANNIVERSARY GALA

Date & Time: Saturday, September 19, 2026, 6:00 pm

Location: Grewal Hall, 224 S. Washington Square, Lansing, MI 48933

Purpose: To commemorate 25 years of exonerations, advocacy, and systemic change, and to launch a sustainability campaign that will power the next generation of justice. This event will also serve as a live fundraising moment, leveraging a matching gift challenge to maximize impact and accelerate giving.

On **September 19, 2026**, we will bring together alumni, legal professionals, community leaders, and advocates to celebrate our impact, and invest in the future.

This milestone event will:

- Honor the lives changed through exoneration
- Recognize the students, attorneys, and partners advancing justice
- Launch a **sustainability campaign** to ensure continued casework, advocacy, and reform

Keynote Speaker

We are honored to welcome Dan Slepian as our keynote speaker.

An Emmy Award-winning journalist and senior investigative producer for Dateline NBC, Dan Slepian is widely recognized for his work exposing wrongful convictions and systemic injustice. He is the author of *The Sing Sing Files: Six Innocent Men and a Twenty-Year Fight for Justice* and a recipient of the **Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Journalism Award** and the **Hillman Prize**.

His investigative work has directly contributed to multiple exonerations and has helped bring national attention to wrongful convictions and systemic injustice, including that of Jon-Adrian (“JJ”) Velazquez, and has brought national attention to flaws in the criminal legal system.

Why Sponsor This Event?

Your sponsorship is more than visibility—it is a direct investment in justice.

As a sponsor, you will:

- Audience includes alumni, members of the judiciary, attorneys, corporate partners, and community leaders from across the region.
- Align your brand with fairness, equity, and human rights
- Gain exposure to a distinguished audience of judges, attorneys, alumni, and civic leaders
- Demonstrate leadership in supporting meaningful systemic change
- Help fund:
 - DNA testing and case investigations
 - Legal advocacy for the wrongfully convicted
 - Student training and experiential learning opportunities

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

SIGNATURE OPPORTUNITY — “25K FOR JUSTICE”

Matching Gift Challenge - Signature Opportunity (Exclusive – 1 Available)

This signature opportunity positions your organization as the driving force behind every gift made that evening. The “25K for Justice” Matching Partner may stand alone as a signature campaign opportunity or be combined with a gala sponsorship for expanded recognition. Our goal for the evening is to inspire generosity in real time through a **live matching gift challenge**—one of the most effective tools for increasing giving and engagement. We are seeking a lead partner to establish a **minimum \$25,000 matching fund**, which will be announced multiple times during the program. All gifts made during the event will be matched dollar-for-dollar—creating urgency, increasing participation, and significantly amplifying total funds raised.

As the “25K for Justice” Matching Partner, you will:

- Be recognized as the exclusive catalyst behind the evening’s giving momentum
- Receive featured recognition during the live appeal at the event
- Be prominently highlighted in event materials, press, and post-event impact reporting
- Be included in *Benchmark Magazine* as a *25K for Justice Partner*
- Continuous recognition on the live donor wall during the event
- Premier recognition on all event materials, press releases, and social media
- Full-page ad in event program
- Opportunity for executive remarks during the program
- A meet-and-greet and photo opportunity with Mr. Slepian
- Two VIP tables (20 guests)
- 20 commemorative shirts and autographed books
- Recognition on the Innocence Project website for one year

This is more than sponsorship—it is an opportunity to ignite generosity, inspire action, and multiply impact in real time.

Matching challenges consistently:

- Motivate more attendees to give
- Increase average gift size
- Double—and often triple—the overall philanthropic impact

PRESENTING SPONSOR — \$25,000 (Limited to 2 Partners)

- Exclusive naming rights: “*25th Anniversary Gala Presented by [Company Name]*”
 - Premier recognition on all event materials, press releases, and social media
 - Full-page ad in event program
 - A meet-and-greet and photo opportunity with Mr. Slepian
 - Two VIP tables (16 guests)
 - 16 commemorative shirts, autographed book
 - Recognition on the Innocence Project website for one year
-

JUSTICE SPONSOR — \$15,000

- Prominent logo placement on event signage, invitations, and program
 - Half-page ad in event program
 - One VIP table (8 guests)
 - 8 commemorative shirts, autographed book
 - Recognition in press release and social media
 - Acknowledgment from the podium
-

FREEDOM SPONSOR — \$10,000

- Logo recognition on event signage and program
 - Quarter-page ad in event program
 - One VIP table (8 guests)
 - 8 commemorative shirts, autographed book
 - Social media recognition
-

ADVOCATE SPONSOR — \$5,000

- Logo recognition in program and signage
 - Four event tickets with reserved seating
 - Social media recognition
-

SUPPORTER SPONSOR — \$2,500

- Name recognition in event program
 - Two event tickets
-

Individual Ticket

- \$125 per ticket

Student Sponsorship

- \$250 per ticket to support law student attendance and engagement

Program Advertising

- Full Page: \$1,000
 - Half Page: \$500
 - Quarter Page: \$250
-

A Moment That Matters

Every exoneration represents years lost but also hope restored. Behind every case is a story of resilience, perseverance, and the unwavering belief that justice must prevail.

Your partnership ensures that:

- Innocent individuals are not forgotten
- Future lawyers are trained to fight for justice
- Systems continue to evolve toward fairness

We welcome the opportunity to partner with you.

To confirm your sponsorship by June 30, 2026, please email advancement@cooley.edu or visit: <https://cooley.edu/innocence25>.