

In The Public's Interest

A system only has as much integrity as the people who comprise it. From what I have personally witnessed and experienced during the past decade here in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) integrity (and truth) is an outlaw behind these walls. This is by no means an indictment of all TDCJ employees, because I have met some truly honest, hardworking, good-hearted, and incorruptible employees. Many are focused only on doing their job to the very best of their ability (and in accordance with the laws and our constitution's guarantees) so that they can earn a decent living and support themselves and their dependents.

However, there are other TDCJ employees who are as corrupt, evil-minded, dishonest, and mentally unstable as the sun is hot. These rogue individuals represent a liability and disservice to their employer, co-workers, and the public's interest in the free rehabilitation of the men, women (and children) incarcerated in the TDCJ.

Behind these walls prisoners as myself have been routinely subjected to various forms of abuses of power by those employees who've been entrusted with our care, custody, and rehabilitation. How can

The public expect anything positive and productive to come out of such a precarious set of circumstances as that which exist in the TUCJ prisons-which operate with virtually no credible nor meaningful outside scrutiny by any government, private or public entities. The long time practice of the public being kept away from these prisons and deferring their operations and management to prison officials who run them as they so desire, must cease for obvious reasons.

My close friend Dr. Richard Korn, once a top administrator of the California Department of Corrections (CDC) sat me down and told me that his philosophy was simple when it came to fulfilling his job duties and responsibilities. Dr. Korn said "when a prisoner or employee is wrong, stand up to them, and when they are right, stand up for them".

In the years since Dr. Korn's death and my unfortunate incarceration, these words of his wisdom and integrity have been replayed in my mind repeatedly. If only more TUCJ employees demonstrated this type of integrity and character, the public interest could finally be realized.