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SUPREME COURT  
COURT OF APPEALS

ORIGINAL

State of Mississippi Judiciary  
Gartin Justice Building  
  
450 High Street  
  
Jackson, MS 39201

P O Box 249

Jackson, MS 39205

Dear Honourable Judges,

**2024-KA-01178-SCT Carly Madison Gregg v. State of Mississippi**

My name is Lisa Ann Featherstone, and I write to you from England. I respectfully submit this letter as both a personal witness to Carly Madison Gregg's character and circumstances, and as a friend of the court, urging careful reconsideration of her conviction and sentence.

I know Carly personally. I speak with her regularly by video, and in September of last year I travelled from England to Mississippi to meet her family in person. During that visit, I spent meaningful time with her maternal grandparents, her stepfather Heath, and Heath's mother. I came because I wanted to understand, not headlines or court summaries, but the people whose lives have been irreversibly changed.

What I encountered was a family living with unimaginable grief.

They lost Ashley, a beloved daughter and mother, in the most tragic way possible. Now, they face the potential loss of Carly, a child through a sentence that threatens to take her entire life before it has truly begun. I wish to state clearly and without reservation: this family has never denied the seriousness of what occurred. What they did not want,

and have never wanted, was for a fourteen year old child to receive a sentence that offers no genuine hope of redemption.

They are mourning twice, once for Ashley, and again for Carly.

Through my conversations with Carly, I have come to know her as kind, gentle and caring. She worries constantly about her family. She struggles to eat. She rarely sleeps. The weight of sadness, missing her mother, fear, and uncertainty has taken a profound toll on her mental and physical health. This suffering is mirrored by her family, who live every day with anxiety over whether Carly will survive emotionally and psychologically under the burden she now carries.

From a legal standpoint, I respectfully submit that Carly's sentencing raises serious constitutional concerns under *Miller v. Alabama* and subsequent precedent governing juvenile sentencing.

At trial, the Court articulated briefly the factors required when sentencing a juvenile: youth, immaturity, brain development, susceptibility to influence, and capacity for change. However, despite their brief articulation, no separate and meaningful *Miller* hearing was conducted. There was no distinct evidentiary phase focused on youth. No opportunity for full mitigation evidence. No dedicated family witness statements addressing sentencing. No pause for deliberation commensurate with the gravity of imposing a sentence that could extinguish a child's future.

Instead, sentencing followed immediately.

Respectfully, reciting the law is not the same as applying it. *Miller* requires more than acknowledgment, it requires careful, individualized consideration. The constitutional mandate exists precisely because children are fundamentally different from adults in culpability and capacity for change.

Modern neuroscience confirms that a fourteen year old's brain is still profoundly underdeveloped, particularly in areas governing impulse control, foresight, emotional regulation, and decision-making. When compounded by mental health challenges and the effects of psychiatric medication, these developmental limitations become even more pronounced. These realities are not excuses—but they are essential considerations when deciding whether a child should be condemned to lose her entire life.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge this Court to grant a new trial.

A new trial would not eliminate accountability. Rather, it would ensure that justice is administered lawfully, thoughtfully, and humanely, with full consideration of the mitigating factors constitutionally required when sentencing a juvenile. It would allow the Court to hear evidence that was not meaningfully weighed before a sentence of extraordinary finality was imposed.

Taking time now does not weaken justice, it strengthens it. Carly Madison Gregg's life, and the integrity of the judicial process itself, deserve nothing less.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Ann Featherstone'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Lisa' being the most prominent part.

Lisa Ann Featherstone, North Yorkshire, England.