

**STATEMENT OF RUDOLF SCOTT-DOUGLAS OWENS FOR FORM
PCA 327 (9/07) PETITION FOR ADOPTION INFORMATION AND ORDER**

For 27 years, the state of Michigan has denied me the most important document any human can have, his or her original birth certificate. I believe this court will find ample reason to defend releasing that document to me through a court order. In my case, I have known my birth families now for 27 years. I have copies of my original birth records, including my adoption decree and medical records, as a result of my birth mother signing a state-recognized legal release in 1989 that was shared with the State of Michigan, the social service agency that handled my adoption, and the Wayne County Probate Court.

The court now has those legal documents in its possession as evidence all relevant record-holding parties legally acknowledged that full legal consent was provided to release information to me. For me, this is a matter of common human decency, fairness, and justice. This has taken time, but I know finding justice is never easy. It is an example of what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. famously called a slow path to the good: "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." At this point in my life, I am no longer wanting to accept the state's continued unjust treatment of me simply because I am an adopted Michigan native who wants what non-adopted Michiganders receive: equal treatment under the law. A just outcome that releases the certificate to me poses no burden, meaningful cost, or harm to any party, nor the state of Michigan.

Published legal and historical research (Elizabeth Samuels, JD; E. Wayne Carp, PhD) for the last 20 years has shown adoptees seeking to know who they are and have their birth records is natural and normal to the adoption experience, and was once perfectly legal to do in the USA. The scholarship by Samuels and Carpe also shows before the 1950s, all birth records were widely shared with all adoptees and never intended to be sealed from them until more restrictive laws were passed by state legislatures as a means to hide illegitimate births of babies like myself. Today, countries like the United Kingdom by federal law give all adoptees all of their birth records when they turn 18. The world has marched forward because of evidence and best practices, marking dramatic changes since the decade I was born in shame and secrecy.

Because I know my birth name (Scott Douglas Owens) and my birth families on both my mother's and father's side, the state has no defensible reason to withhold my birth certificate document any further. The legal defense it offers references laws that were written to deny a basic and critical right to adoptees such as myself who were born between 1945 and 1980. Being an adoptee born in those years means I can be treated as a second-class person with lesser rights than all other Michigan natives, including adoptees born in other years.

Given that I know who I am and know my biological families, for decades now, keeping me from having a copy of birth certificate can no longer be justified as serving the interests of the people of Michigan, the well-being of adoptive families, the petitioner, or the U.S. legal principals of justice and fairness. No party is served

**STATEMENT OF RUDOLF SCOTT-DOUGLAS OWENS FOR FORM
PCA 327 (9/07) PETITION FOR ADOPTION INFORMATION AND ORDER**

by this extreme interpretation of state law that defies basic principles of common sense and basic human decency.

Even though the state and Wayne County Probate Court tried to keep me from knowing my biological heritage and potentially life-saving family medical history, I found my biological kin when I searched in the 1980s. Because I prevailed, my maternal grandmother and grandfather died happy knowing they had finally met their grandson. Knowing they died happy because they met me has been one of the most gratifying things I have ever experienced. It made up for the opposition I have faced for decades asking for what is human, normal, and ultimately fair.