

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
March 25, 2009

Contact: Bruce Berkowitz
707-664-2782

"Life Without Parole"
A play about women in prison due to domestic violence

(SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY) Associated Students Productions and the SSU Criminal Justice program is proud to announce the staged reading of a new play, "Life Without Parole," featuring the stories of five women serving lengthy prison terms for defending themselves from their abusive partners.

Come see this compelling performance at the SSU Cooperage on Friday, April 24 at 7 p.m. Discussion with the playwright and the cast will follow. Admission is Free to all.

About the play

"Life Without Parole" was written by Warren Doody, a professor of English and Theater at Vanguard University and award-winning playwright, based on research gathered by Dr. Elizabeth Leonard for her book *Convicted Survivors: The Imprisonment of Battered Women Who Kill*. The research included conversations with over 40 women from diverse backgrounds who were serving prison terms for killing their abusive partners at the California Institution for Women.

After completing her book, Dr. Leonard approached Doody and urged him to transform her research into a play in order to reach a broader audience. Doody conducted extensive research on domestic violence prior to developing the play, including consulting with Northern Arizona University criminal justice Professor Dr. Nancy Wonders.

The play is written using as many of the women's words as possible in the script and relies on minimal staging in order to capture the austere experience of incarceration. The play is unique because it provides audiences with an opportunity to consider what leads women in abusive relationships to kill their abusers, to understand some of the dynamics of domestic violence, and to get an honest and at times raw glimpse of life in prison.

The team of actors has read the play to students at Northern Arizona University and at Vanguard University, as well as victims of domestic violence and shelter workers in California. All have praised the work as powerful, highly engaging, and informative.

Most recently, Doody and his team of actors visited the California Institution for Women in Chino and performed the play for 55 incarcerated survivors who are members of the battered women's support group, *Convicted Women Against Abuse*. The script itself originally incorporated many of these women's stories into the text, making the performance extremely moving for everyone involved.

This event is part of the *Interrupted Life – Incarcerated Mothers in the United States* program.

For more information call 707-664-2382 or www.sonoma.edu/as/asp.