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GOVERNOR'S PRESS OFFICE

**GOVERNOR GLENDENING GRANTS POSTHUMOUS PARDON
TO JOHN SNOWDEN**

ANNAPOLIS, MD (May 31, 2001)-- Today, after careful consideration of a recommendation by the Maryland Parole Commission, Governor Parris N. Glendening granted a posthumous pardon to John Snowden. Snowden was hanged February 28, 1919 for the murder of an Annapolis woman. The Governor issued the following statement regarding the pardon:

"The search for justice has no statute of limitations. In Maryland, we pride ourselves on building an inclusive society based on a fair and balanced system of justice that protects the rights of all. When faced with a possible miscarriage of justice -- even one from the distant past, our values compel us to take a second look.

"The case of John Snowden deserved just such a look. The exceptional set of circumstances surrounding this case has led me to grant Mr. Snowden a posthumous pardon. While it is impossible at this late date to establish with certainty his guilt or innocence, there is substantial doubt that justice was served by his hanging. There were enough troubling questions raised at the time, that the State should not have imposed the death penalty without further investigation. Not only did two key trial witnesses recant their testimony, but eleven of the 12 jurors wrote letters asking the Governor to commute the sentence. The refusal of a stay of execution denied the victim's family and the Snowden family the assurance that justice had been served. Based on the facts reviewed, I agree with the Maryland Parole Commission that, while it is too late to prove the innocence or guilt of Mr. Snowden, we can conclude that the hanging may well have been a miscarriage of justice. For this reason I have granted the pardon."