

Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
Committee
University of Rochester
Rochester, New York 14627

February 4, 1965

To whom it may concern:

On August 4, 1964 the bodies of three civil rights workers, James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner, were found in a pond-dam outside of Philadelphia, Mississippi. On Friday, December 4, 1964, twenty-one men were arrested and charged with violation of the constitutional rights of these three men. A Federal Grand Jury has indicted eighteen of the twenty-one men on two Federal charges: 1) conspiracy to violate men's civil rights, and 2) participation in a conspiracy with law officers to inflict punishment on civil rights workers without due process of law. The trial of these men is pending.

We members of the academic community of the University of Rochester are circulating a petition, addressed to President Johnson and Attorney General Nicholas deB. Katzenbach, among many colleges across the country. The purpose of the petition is twofold. First, we wish to bring pressure to bear on the President and the Justice Department to continue doing all in their power to halt the daily violations of civil rights in the South. Specifically, we wish to see justice carried out in this particular case. Secondly, we wish the government to know that we are behind their present endeavors to achieve justice in this case.

We are asking you to obtain as many signatures as possible, and to send your signed petition to both the President and the Attorney General. We hope that a large response from numerous colleges will carry an impact. As citizens of this country, as concerned faculty and students, and as present and future voters, we must make a concerted effort to express our desire to see justice done where it is so vitally lacking.

Very truly yours,

Ellen Fox
Stephen Clorfeine

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Friends of SNCC

P.S. Enclosed please find a copy of the petition. We would also like to explain briefly our procedure in carrying out this project. We hope it may facilitate matters for you. First we obtained recognition and support from two constitutional, campus recognized groups, CR & CL and Friends of SNCC. We then mimeographed petitions and signature sheets. After circulating twenty petitions with a signature sheet on each one for two weeks, we attached all the signed sheets to one typewritten petition. With a brief letter indicating the enclosure of the petition we sent it to Attorney General Nicholas deB. Katzenbach. We also sent a copy of the petition and Xeroxed signatures to President Johnson.