

On May 3, CAL's YEARS project secured release of Sheldon J and Jerry R, who'd been sentenced to decades-long sentences as young men.

CAL's YEARS project works to obtain release of clients, convicted when they were youth or emerging adults, who were sentenced to inhumanely tragically long sentences. Sheldon had been sentenced to a term of 50 years for his participation in three robberies, Jerry, who was just over 18 when the offense was committed, was sentenced to 40 to life. Our YEARS project, and our success on Sheldon and Jerry's behalves, shows CAL's ongoing commitment to its clients: Sheldon and Jerry both became CAL clients a generation ago---in 1999.

Despite childhoods filled with desperate trauma and abuse and tragically long sentences, Sheldon and Jerry grew into remarkable men while in prison. Yet, although each man had served more than two decades in prison, their releases were still years -- even decades -- in the future. CAL's attorneys and mitigation staff---with the support of Cardozo Law School's Perlmutter Center for Legal Justice ---succeeded in showing the District Attorney and the court the manifest injustice of the crushing sentences imposed upon these young men. With the consent of New York District Attorney Alvin Bragg, Justice Pickholz of New York Supreme Court effectively reduced Sheldon and Jerry's sentences to time served.

Sheldon and Jerry have now been reunited with their families outside prison walls, where we know they will thrive, despite the challenges ahead.