

## **Pamela Smart's Letter to the New Hampshire Governor and Executive Council**

My name is Pamela Smart. I am also known as inmate X93G0356. I was only 22 years old when I was first incarcerated. I have now spent over 31 years in prison—more than half my life.

I apologize to the entire Smart family, my own family, and all who were directly or indirectly impacted by my actions and misjudgment. For many years, I blamed others for my incarceration because I was immature, selfish and proud. I refused to see my own role in Gregg's death and instead referred blame elsewhere. It took years, even decades, for me to accept responsibility and I must carry that burden, alone and deservedly, for the rest of my life recognizing that the pain and suffering I have caused are irreparable. This burden is something I can never—and should never—be free of, because my actions have forever changed the course of many lives, including my own.

I have worked hard to redeem myself through good works and to positively affect the lives of those around me, striving to be more than my worst mistakes and behaviors. Some of these efforts are reflected in the resume attached to this petition, as well as letters attesting to my character and achievements. They chronicle how I spent the last three decades in prison and provide additional perspectives about who I am. I take no credit for my accomplishments; I have earned nothing on my own. Only God and the extraordinary people He sent to guide me are responsible for both my survival and growth.

In seeking a deeper, more personal relationship with God, my faith increased over the years, as did my willingness to confront my character defects and accept the nurturance of a dedicated array of teachers and ministers who have come to Bedford Hills. The process was slow, very slow. Thankfully, I serve a patient God who meets us where we are and takes us where we need to be. He has put many leaders of different faiths in my path who encouraged me, changed me, and loved me along the way. They showed me that I needed to look backwards in order to go forward. I needed to face who I was and what I did in order to become who God wanted me to be.

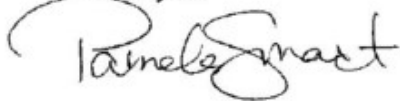
My journey in prison has been humbling and instructive. The shame, humiliation and loss of freedom are ever present. They have been accompanied by significant traumas resulting in chronic physical pain. I was brutally beaten by inmates and sexually assaulted by a corrections officer. These episodes have left permanent, emotional, physical, and psychological scars. But despite the fact that I have a mandated life sentence without parole, I have strived to live a life in prison that can overcome the inevitable despair and loss of hope such a judgment brings. I have tried to create hope in my own life and in the lives of so many others. I try to live my life in prison in a way that has both meaning and purpose and overcomes the hopelessness of my sentence.

I am no longer the naïve, self-centered and immature 22 year old I was three decades ago. Today, my relationship with God comes first and guides me in all areas of my life. I know there is nothing that can recompense a life lost through a senseless crime. There is no universal measuring stick that calibrates when enough punishment is enough. Yet, our faith also instructs us that there is forgiveness and there is mercy.

Thus, I do not come from a place where I can say I "deserve" a commutation of sentence. What has tormented me for three decades, however, is not only the horrible and undeserved murder of my husband, Gregg, but knowing that my aging parents who are in declining health are suffering because of my poor judgment and inexcusable acts. For the entirety of my life I have had the blessings of their love, the example of their loyalty and the inspiration of their faith. These have sustained me throughout the long, long years of my incarceration—a sentence they are serving alongside me in unbearable shame and humiliation. They do not deserve, nor have ever deserved, such a painful and devastating burden. I have deprived them of the joys of being grandparents and the comfort of my care in their declining age.

It is my hope that one day, in freedom, I can spend the rest of their remaining years making amends for everything they have lost because of me. In the same vein, my debt to society also demands massive restitution and a commitment, not just to being good—but to doing good. I pledge to do so with all my heart. I will not let you or the Executive Council down. I place my plea before you asking that justice be tempered with mercy and compassion in light of who I am today.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pamela Smart". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Pamela Smart