



Nonhuman Rights Project

Press Release

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Nonhuman Rights Project Continues Legal Battle to Free Tommy the Chimpanzee

Case Refiled in New York Supreme Court in Manhattan with 60 Additional Pages of Expert Affidavits, Including Jane Goodall's

December 3, 2015 – New York, NY – Continuing its campaign to achieve personhood and legal rights for nonhuman animals, [The Nonhuman Rights Project](http://www.nonhumanrights.org), Inc. (NhRP) announced today that it re-filed its common law habeas corpus case on behalf of Tommy, a chimpanzee who lives in a cage on a used trailer lot in Gloversville, NY, on December 3 with the New York State Supreme Court in Manhattan

The NhRP's refiling of Tommy's case represents a significant development in its ongoing legal work. According to the NhRP's Founder, Steven M. Wise, this refiling is significant for the substantial new evidence the NhRP is now presenting -- 60 pages of affidavits from leading chimpanzee cognition experts from around the world showing that chimpanzees do in fact have the capacity to assume duties and responsibilities.

The NhRP's previous appeal on behalf of Tommy was denied largely on the ground that chimpanzees lack the capacity to assume duties and responsibilities.

"We are now armed with a significant mass of new evidence from leading chimpanzee experts showing that chimpanzees do in fact assume duties and responsibilities." Mr. Wise said. "This is an important step forward in our ongoing work to secure legal rights and personhood status for nonhumans such as Tommy."

Following are the experts who have provided additional affidavits for Tommy's case: Jane Goodall, James R. Anderson, Christophe Boesch, Mary Lee Jensvold, William C. McGrew, and Sue Savage-Rumbaugh.

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The NhRP is the only civil rights organization working through the common law to achieve actual legal rights for members of species other than our own. Tommy's new case may have a significant impact on several other important NhRP cases, particularly the case for Hercules and Leo.

Hercules and Leo are two nine-year-old chimpanzees owned by the University of Louisiana's New Iberia Research Center. New Iberia leased the two when they were infants six years ago to Stony Brook University in New York. They have now been imprisoned for two-thirds of their lives at Stony Brook, being used in scientific research to help answer a question of little consequence – how humans evolved straight legs.

Over the past several months, the Nonhuman Rights Project has worked tirelessly with the New York Attorney General, Stony Brook, and Save the Chimps, one of the premier chimpanzee sanctuaries in the world, to arrange for the release and transfer of Hercules and Leo to Save the Chimps. Sadly, New Iberia is blocking the release of Hercules and Leo. For more information on Hercules and Leo please visit

<http://www.nonhumanrightsproject.org/2015/11/24/open-letter-and-petition-demand-sanctuary-for-hercules-and-leo/>

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About the Nonhuman Rights Project

Founded in 1996 by attorney Steven M. Wise, the Nonhuman Rights Project (NhRP) is the only civil rights organization working through the common law to achieve actual *legal* rights for members of species other than our own. Our mission is to change the common law status of at least some nonhuman animals from mere "things," which lack the capacity to possess any legal right, to "persons," who possess such fundamental rights as bodily integrity and bodily liberty and those other legal rights to which evolving standards of morality, scientific discovery, and human experience entitle them. Our current plaintiffs are members of species who have been scientifically proven to be self-aware and autonomous: currently, great apes, elephants, dolphins, and whales. We are also working with teams of attorneys on four continents to develop campaigns to achieve legal rights for nonhuman animals that are suited to the respective legal systems of these countries. Our first cases were filed in December of 2013. For more information on the Nonhuman Rights Project, please visit www.nonhumanrights.org or email us at media@nonhumanrights.org.

About NhRP President Steven M. Wise

Steven M. Wise began his mission to gain rights for nonhuman animals in 1985. He holds a J.D. from Boston University Law School and a B.S. in chemistry from the College of William and Mary. He has practiced animal protection law for 38 years and is admitted to the Massachusetts Bar. Professor Wise taught the first class in "Animal Rights Law" at the Harvard Law School and is currently teaching "Animal Rights Jurisprudence" at the Lewis and Clark Law School and Vermont Law School. He is the author of four books: *Rattling the Cage – Toward Legal Rights for Animals*; *Drawing the Line – Science and the Case for*



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Animal Rights; Though the Heavens May Fall – The Landmark Trial That Led to the End of Human Slavery; and *An American Trilogy – Death, Slavery, and Dominion Along the Banks of the Cape Fear River*. His [TED Talk](#) from the TED2015 Conference in Vancouver, Canada was released in May of 2015, and has over 900,000 views.