

Bazon Center Mourns Ricky Wyatt Whose Case Launched Mental Health Law

Washington, D.C. -- November 4, 2011 -- The trustees and staff of the Bazon Center for Mental Health Law mourn the passing of Ricky Wyatt, who was the lead plaintiff in a landmark case against mental health institutions in Alabama.

"The Wyatt case created mental health law," said Ira Burnim, the Bazon Center's legal director. "It led to the end of the worst abuses in state institutions and sparked decades of civil rights advocacy for equal access and community integration," explained Burnim. "The Wyatt standards became part of the fabric of U.S. and, indeed, international law."

The experts involved in the Wyatt case went on to form the nonprofit organization now known as the Bazon Center for Mental Health Law. Mr. Wyatt died November 1, 2011, in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, at the age of 57.