

Gov. Evers: Grants 17 pardons, brings total pardons granted to 174

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers announced today that he has granted another 17 pardons. The Governor's Pardon Advisory Board heard from applicants virtually and applicants whom the Board recommended for pardon were forwarded to Gov. Evers for final consideration. To date, the Governor has granted 174 pardons.

"Pardoning an individual is a big step to allowing them to move on in their lives and continue to study, work, and contribute to their communities," said Gov. Evers. "With these 17 pardons, I am glad to continue the important process of listening to people's stories, and giving those who have worked hard the ability to have a second chance."

Gov. Evers granted pardons to the following people:

- Carol Matthews was in her mid-twenties, raising a child alone and working at a cleaning company, when she failed to report her income while receiving government assistance. A longtime caregiver of people with disabilities, she earned her CNA and works independently in Milwaukee.
- Anton House was in his late teens when he was twice found in possession of an illegal substance. He has since earned his Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, and Doctor of Philosophy degrees and uses his impressive education as a Lecturer at Howard University and to mentor youth in Bowie, Maryland, where he resides.
- Richard Dziondziakowski was in his late teens in the 1960s when he illegally entered two service stations and stole cigarettes. Now retired in Oak Creek from a career in masonry and construction, his pardon will help him on his path to becoming a United States citizen—a lifelong goal.

- Eric Lonsdale was in his mid-twenties when he was caught growing cannabis. He is now an active community member in Fort Atkinson, where he lives with his family.
- Dirmitrius Jackson was in his early twenties when he was caught in possession of illegal substances. He lives in Kenosha with his family and is hopeful his pardon will help advance his career.
- Edward Lantvit was 36 years old when he was caught trying to buy an illegal substance. More than three decades later, he is now a small businessman and real estate appraiser with his son. He lives in Fremont and is a proud grandfather to 14 grandchildren.
- Malcolm Wilson was in his early thirties when he failed to report income while receiving government assistance and FoodShare. He has since earned an associate's degree and has been a lifelong resident and employee of the city of Milwaukee.
- Sondra Gorham was struggling with a substance use disorder in her mid-twenties when she was caught in possession of illegal substances and driving under the influence. She has achieved her tenth year of sobriety with her family in Neenah and is diligently pursuing higher education.
- Christopher Walters was 27 years old when he was caught in possession of illegal substances. A U.S. Navy veteran, he lives with his family and owns and operates a business in Poncha Springs, Colorado.
- Joede Polezynski was just 19 years old when she was caught in possession of an illegal substance. More than fifteen years later, she hopes a pardon will help her pursue a career in banking. She resides in Milwaukee.
- Sandra Vessel-Swanigan was around twenty years old in the late 1970s when she failed to disclose her employment when applying for government assistance. Over four decades later, she lives and works in Milwaukee.
- Jason Alston was 20 when he was twice found in possession of illegal substances. He has since found his passion in the culinary field and is now the owner and operator of a well-respected restaurant as well as a minister at a church where he resides in Milwaukee.
- Preston Jackson, Jr. was caring for his father when he was caught in possession of an illegal substance. A military veteran, he served in Desert Storm and Desert Shield and now works for the Veterans Affairs in Milwaukee.
- Nikki Thiel was involved in the sale of an illegal substance at age of 20. She hopes a pardon will help her be able to volunteer at her son's school. She now co-owns a family business in Oregon.
- Shannon Sweeney-Walker was in her early twenties when illegal substances were found in her residence. She has since earned her associate's degree in accounting and lives in Racine where she is an active member of her community.

- James Harris was 17 years old when he was caught in possession of an illegal substance. Almost two decades later, he is a successful small business owner in Milwaukee, where he resides with his family.
- Tamara Love was only 19 years old when she sold a very small amount of an illegal substance to an undercover officer. Almost thirty years later, she is a licensed practical nurse and runs her own state licensed adult family home in Milwaukee.

The Wisconsin Constitution grants the governor the power to pardon individuals convicted of a crime. A pardon is an official act of forgiveness that restores some of the rights that are lost when someone is convicted of a felony, including the right to serve on a jury, hold public office, and hold certain professional licenses. A pardon does not result in an expungement.

Under Executive Order 30, individuals convicted of a Wisconsin felony may apply for a pardon if they completed their sentence at least five years ago and have not committed any new crimes. Individuals currently required to register on the sex offender registry are ineligible for a pardon.

The pardon application, instructions, and answers to frequently asked questions regarding the pardon process are located on the Governor's website: <https://evers.wi.gov/Pages/pardon-information.aspx>

The Governor's Pardon Advisory Board will continue to meet virtually monthly and will be reconvening again on April 9, 2021. That hearing will air on WisEye.Org/Live from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm.