

*Gideon v. Wainwright*

**W. Fred Turner, Gideon's Court-Appointed Attorney for the Re-Trial  
Monologue**

*(257 Words)*

*[Fred Turner walks over to the jury box and puts his hand on the rail. He holds a legal pad with the script on it, and reads:]*

I'm Fred Turner. The local district court appointed me to represent Mr. Gideon after the Supreme Court sent his case back to Florida for a re-trial.

When I represented Mr. Gideon, I knew my way around a courtroom. I had some role, in more than 100 trials over the course of my career.

But I'll never forget this one. Not just because it was a landmark Supreme Court case, but because it is credited with starting public defender systems across the nation. It is a system of dedicated and highly competent attorneys who are there to help people like you, if you should get into trouble and can't afford a lawyer.

I was quite impressed with Mr. Gideon's "civic engagement" as we'd call it today. The fact that he did his own legal research while in prison, picked up a pencil, and wrote a letter to the Supreme Court shows that we, as citizens, have the right and the responsibility to engage with our justice system and keep it accountable.

All of us – all of you -- have a stake in a well-run justice system. In the wrong circumstances, you could be Clarence Earl Gideon, and you have him to thank for the public defender who would represent you.

Later, you'll get to talk with some of today's public defenders.

But right now we're going to hear from a young man whose case opened up the due process – fair process -- rights of juveniles. His name is Gerry Gault.