

## Help for Parker is welcome

**I**t's gratifying that Darrel Parker has gained allies recently as he continues his long struggle to clear his name.

Perhaps it's not all that surprising that he has found people willing to help.

There was a time when society accepted, virtually without question, the verdicts rendered by the criminal justice system.

Recent Nebraska cases have demonstrated that confidence can be misplaced.

Parker was convicted of first-degree murder for strangling his wife to death in 1955.

Key to his conviction was a confession that a Chicago investigator wrung out of Parker after hours of interrogation during which Parker was deprived of food and sleep.

The next day, Parker recanted. But it was too late.

The lesson that oppressive tactics can lead to a false

confession was driven home recently by the notorious case of the Beatrice 6, convicted and imprisoned wrongly in the death of Helen Wilson of Beatrice, and the wrongful arrest of Matthew Livers in the death of his uncle and aunt, Wayne and Sharmon Stock of Murdock.

In both those cases, suspects confessed to the crime.

But the confessions were bogus, extracted by skilled investigators who may have not even realized the power their techniques had to warp the search for truth and justice.

In both cases, DNA evidence linked other suspects to the crime. The evidence was conclusive.

Sadly, the possibility that DNA evidence could clear Parker's name appears to have vanished with the loss of semen samples that police took from the crime scene in Parker's home where his wife Nancy was bound, gagged, raped and strangled.

Parker already has been pardoned in the case. That

came three years after attorneys revealed that death row inmate Wesley Peery had confessed to them that he had committed the murder. Attorneys Stan Cohen and Toney Redman said they pledged to Peery not to reveal the confession until after his death.

But a pardon is not a declaration of innocence. That's what Parker, 79, wants.

The case is now the subject of the book "Barbarous Souls" by David Strauss, son-in-law of Thomas McManus, one of Parker's original attorneys. And recently Lincoln attorney Herb Friedman took Parker's case. He's filed motions seeking evidence. He may file a claim. He may file a lawsuit.

So the wheels of justice still are grinding.

It's not too late to hope that the doubt that has grown to mammoth proportions in this case might some day soon be conclusively resolved.