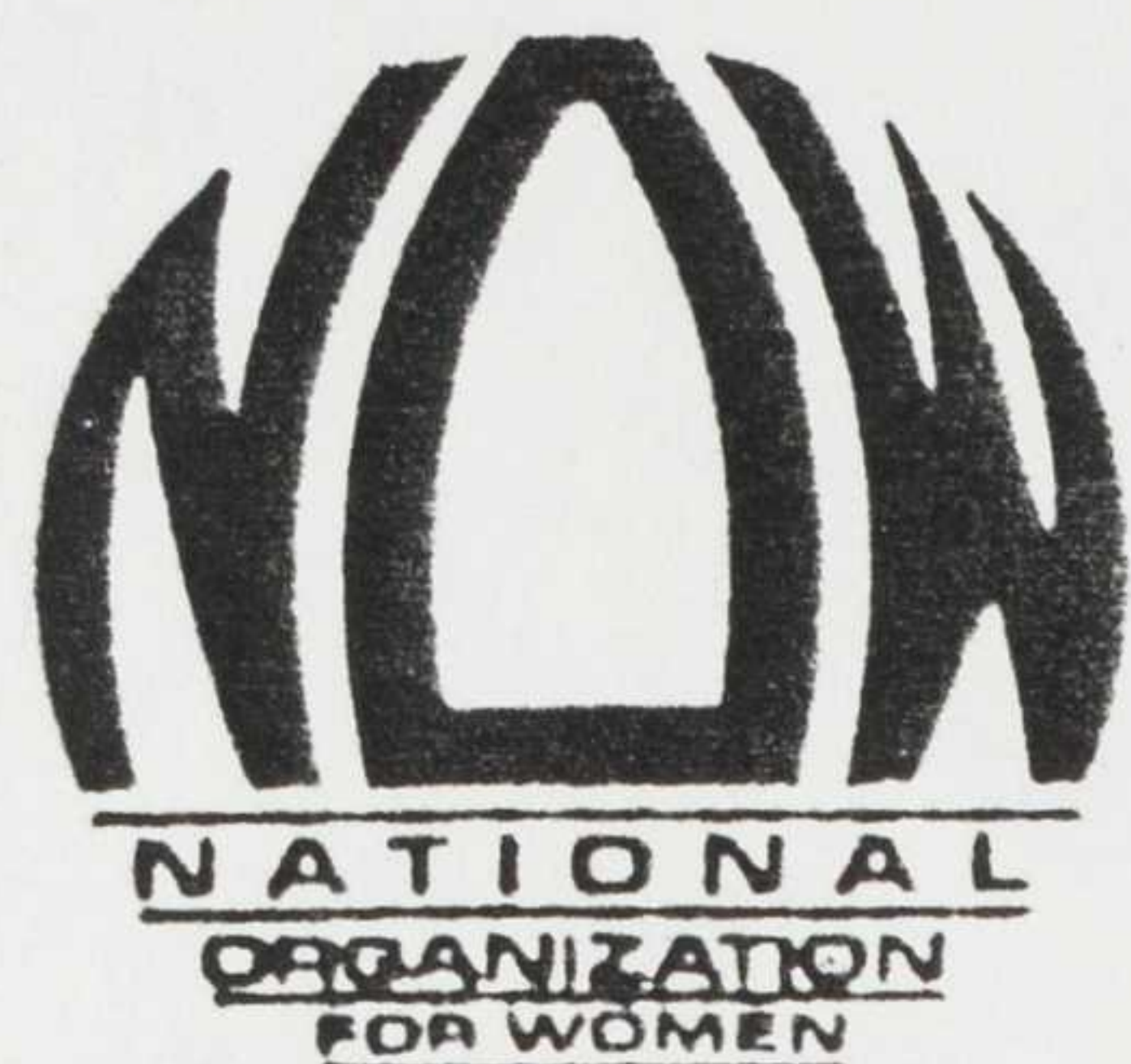




National Organization for Women, Inc.

1401 New York Avenue, N.W., Suite 800 • Washington, D.C. 20005-2102 • (202) 347-2279

August 26, 1988

Mark Curtis Defense Committee
P. O. Box 1048
Des Moines, Iowa 50311

Dear Friends:

After carefully reading the materials you provided, along with all the newspaper reports available on the Mark Curtis case, I have decided to write this letter of support for Mr. Curtis.

It is obvious that he is being both framed and railroaded. The police appear to be escalating their attacks on him and exaggerating their stories. In addition, I find it difficult to believe that the Des Moines police force demonstrates such vigor in prosecuting sexual assault crimes on behalf of a Black woman. As a Black former director of a Rape Crisis Center, we often encountered incredible difficulties in convincing the police to pursue crimes committed against Black women with the same energy with which they followed crimes committed against white women. Thus, that alone would make a Black anti-rape activist suspicious of the circumstances of this case. We know that justice in America is not colorblind.

The fact that the police also contend that this alleged crime took place in front of a witness is also suspicious. My professional knowledge of rapists is that they much rather not have witnesses to the assault, regardless of the witnesses' age. How this elaborate charade was orchestrated is beyond me to comprehend or explain. However, too many inconsistencies appear in the police account of the event and the political objectives they hope to achieve, the silencing of Mark Curtis and other activists, are painfully obvious.

I regret that my schedule does not allow me to attend the support rally. I'd like to wish Mr. Curtis the best of luck and the hope that truth can be suppressed or derailed, but never erased.

In Solidarity,

Loretta J. Ross
Director, Women of Color Programs
National NOW Action Center

P.S. This is a personal endorsement, not an organizational one.