New York, NY –

The Women’s Prison Association (WPA) mourns the passing of Sister Elaine Roulet and celebrates the enduring impact of her actions that have allowed countless children to connect meaningfully with their mothers while their mothers were incarcerated. Her work in New York created opportunities for women to continue growing as mothers while they were incarcerated and served as a national model for supporting systems-involved families. Research shows that women are more likely to succeed in the community after release if they maintain involvement with their children while incarcerated. Sister Elaine connected women on the inside with their children - through visitation programs and a positive visitation environment - and by supporting women’s efforts to communicate with their children and children's caregivers. At WPA, we will carry on Sister Elaine’s legacy of honoring the dignity and agency of women, who we know to be the experts in their own lives and capable of redefining their lives in the face of injustice and incarceration with the right support and resources.

To learn more about Sister Elaine’s innovative work, we recommend viewing Jenifer McShane’s documentary, Mothers of Bedford.