The
VICTIM'S INFORMER
TEXAS CRIME VICTIM CLEARINGHOUSE VOL. 18, NO. 1 – MARCH/APRIL 2013

What is Past is Prologue...

Honoring and Remembering Suzanne McDaniel

Angie McCown, Director

As I think about Suzanne's life and her dedication to the victims' rights movement, I can see many comparisons between her life and that of Susan B. Anthony, who led the women's suffrage movement fighting for women's right to vote. Although Susan B. Anthony did not live long enough to witness the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution, her blood, sweat and tears are on every page. And although Suzanne did not live long enough to witness the passing of the Victims' Rights Constitutional Amendment I believe that when, *not if*, we pass the Amendment, Suzanne's blood, sweat and tears will be on every page. Preserving the history of the victims' rights movement so that it might be shared with the advocates of the future was extremely important to Suzanne. It is fitting that a tree will be planted in Suzanne's honor on the Texas Capitol grounds between the Capitol and the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, whose motto is "Preserving Yesterday, Informing Today, Inspiring Tomorrow." Suzanne believed that a critical component to passionate victim advocacy was a deep understanding and appreciation of the tireless work and dedication of so many advocates and victims who paved the way. Susan B. Anthony felt the same as she once stated bluntly, "so many of these young people know nothing of the past; they are apt to think they have sprung up from somebody's gourd, and that nothing ever was done until they came." I was fortunate to have shared many stories with Suzanne regarding the rich history of our movement. I think this quote from one of Susan B. Anthony's last interviews reflects Suzanne's thoughts at the end of her journey, "If I could only live another century! I do so want to see the fruition of the work for women (victims) in the past century. There is so much yet to be done, I see so many things I would like to do and say, but I must leave it for the younger generation. We old fighters (old buffaloes) have prepared the way, and it is easier than it was fifty years ago when I first got into the harness. The young blood, fresh with enthusiasm and with all the enlightenment of the twentieth (twenty-first) century must carry on the work."

The following are reflections from some of the old buffaloes who had the privilege of paving the way with Suzanne:

Herman Millholland

Suzanne was skilled and highly expert in her work on behalf of crime victims. It was a true honor to spend eight incredible years working side by side with Suzanne, advising the governor and attorney general of Texas on crime victim issues and initiatives, developing public policy, creating and implementing programs on behalf of crime victims, communities and the advocacy organizations that served them. The work most near and dear to Suzanne was enforcing the rights of crime victims at the national level. She worked tirelessly to give crime victims a voice, always pushing for legislation so that crime victims would be afforded the same rights as that of the offender. Suzanne was also the voice for victim advocates in prosecutors' offices, where her career began. In 1976, she created the first prosecutor-based victim services program in Texas in the Harris County District Attorney's Office in Houston. Suzanne embodied what advocacy was all about, and she was passionate and resolute in her work on behalf of crime victims. She was indeed the consummate advocate. Above all she was a treasured friend who will be missed.

The
VICTIM'S INFORMER

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

This edition of *The Victim's Informer* is dedicated to the memory of Suzanne McDaniel, who passed away last year. She was a pioneering and compassionate woman and a tremendous force in the victims' rights community. What follows is a collection of thoughts and remembrances from various members of the victim services community who had the great privilege of working with Suzanne over the last thirty years.

Sharon English

Suzanne was the go-to person in Texas in the early years of national victim services development. She was smart and funny and devoted to her work. We tried to get her to take a few days off and join the Old Buffalos roundups, but she always kept her work as her priority. She was one of those people you might not see for years and yet were instantly reconnected to by telephone or the occasional in person opportunity. I was proud to nominate her for the President's Award in 1995, and she gave the most outstanding and moving acceptance speech. She fought her long-standing health problems with the same vigor and determination she gave to promoting and implementing victim services in Texas. Some things are just not fair and losing Suzanne so early was wrong. We will miss her forever.

Steve Derene

Was Suzanne's greatest contribution to the victims' field her role as a "NOVA News" team anchor? Perhaps not, but she certainly knew how to inspire others while having lots of fun. She was an innovator, a great mentor, and an effective advocate whose impact has been felt well beyond Texas state lines.

Congressman Judge Ted Poe

As a District Court Judge in Houston, Texas, the first time I learned about crime victims' rights and their needs was from Suzanne McDaniel. While I had countless victims in my courtroom, Suzanne – as one of our Nation's first prosecution-based victim advocates – helped me truly understand victims' rights and their need for justice.

Suzanne McDaniel epitomized everything that is essential to effective victim services – compassion, understanding, and a commitment to justice for crime victims. She woke up every day of her life asking, "How can I make the lives of crime victims I serve better?," and then spent her day answering this question through her personal, professional and positive actions.

Suzanne's death in 2012 left a hole in America's victim assistance field. Yet Suzanne's legacy lives on with the 'Suzanne McDaniel Memorial Public Awareness Award' created by my U.S. Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus to honor victim advocates who follow Suzanne's path to ensure that victims' needs and rights are part of America's collective discussion about individual and community safety.

Suzanne McDaniel remains a light in our lives, and an everlasting beacon for crime victim service.

D'An Anders

Suzanne McDaniel was one of my dearest friends in the victim services movement. I have many memories that illustrate her character, dedication, and accomplishments. One of the most important was Suzanne's ability to approach any situation with a positive attitude. Suzanne had an innate ability to see what was "possible" and to work with an array of victim services and criminal justice professionals toward a consensus, and in doing so, advance the victim services movement. This required a delicate balance of listening, learning, and compromising between these professionals. By always having a positive attitude behind her beautiful smile, Suzanne was able to encourage all of us to work together to focus on the needs of crime victims. This was one of her greatest accomplishments.

As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.
~ John F. Kennedy

Anne Seymour

Suzanne McDaniel exemplified what it means to be a victim advocate. My friend and beloved "sister" was a creator, a collaborator, and a *compassionista*—all important attributes that guaranteed her amazing impact on our field. Suzanne was quick with advice, quicker still with hilarious, witty remarks, and well-known and revered for her efforts to mentor "newbies" in our field. The "Old Buffaloes" tremendously miss our dear friend, but know her legacy lives on with each of us blessed to have known her.

Signing of Crime Victims Bill of Rights in 1985 (Suzanne McDanield pictured fourth from left)

NOT ONLY AN INSPIRING COLLEAGUE, BUT ALSO A PERSONAL FRIEND

Verna Lee Carr
People Against Violent Crime

Suzanne was a true pioneer of the victims' rights movement. She was not only an inspiring colleague, but also a personal friend to many victim advocates across Texas. We each have our stories of the impact Suzanne made in our journey through life. She helped us in ways she probably never even knew, and there is no doubt that all who knew her can look back on fond memories. She was accessible to anyone, no matter their status. To this day, whenever I have questions or feel frustrated, I can hear her with one of her favorite quotes, "Darling, remember that you cannot save the world." Her support and encouragement meant so much to all of us within People Against Violent Crime (PAVC). It is truly impossible to express the deep sorrow we felt with her passing and how much we miss her still today.

I remember in November 2011 when Suzanne contacted PAVC to inform us that due to medical issues she would not be able to attend the Tree of Angels (TOA) that year. It was the first TOA she missed since it's inception in 1991. Though she did not attend, she still mailed a donation for the TOA. Looking back on the winter and spring months following our telephone conversation, it is hard to imagine how difficult it

continued on next page

continued from page 3

must have been for her during her illness and treatments to continue to work and attend so many meetings. Suzanne simply never wanted to let her colleagues down.

Suzanne always encouraged us to stretch, to think, to achieve, to fight for what we believed in, and to continue the legacy of teaching the next generation to be productive and effective advocates. During three decades of service, Suzanne brought meaning to the words justice and compassion, and because of that, she leaves behind a remarkable body of good works that will enable all who follow her to carry on a noble cause for generations to come. As we continue to remember and honor Suzanne's life, it is important that we go forth and hold in our hearts her prayer and our prayer: that victims begin to see themselves as survivors who have the courage to rise from the ashes of unspeakable pain and go on to lead meaningful lives. We must honor the experience we have had with her and take a lesson from her wisdom and knowledge. As advocates, we can honor Suzanne's memory by forming a human chain of promise and courage and rededicate ourselves to be the best advocates we can be to the victims of this great state.

SUZANNE BROUGHT MEANING TO THE WORDS JUSTICE AND COMPASSION.

Suzanne McDaniel's contribution to our lives and our time will be remembered by how she made a point of telling each victim's story and how she created a space for justice for all victims. She was a champion in the greatest sense, and she is dearly missed.

SHE IS THE REASON WE DO THE WORK THAT WE DO

Nancy Holmes Ghigna,
Victim Assistance Director
Montgomery County DA's Office

I started as a volunteer for the Montgomery County District Attorney's Office in 1993. Along with eight other volunteers, I attended the Clearinghouse Conference in Austin that year. The first person I met was Suzanne. I was pouring myself a cup of coffee the first morning of the conference and got a big hello from a total stranger. She introduced herself and told me several times how excited she was to meet me. That was Suzanne. In a matter of minutes she felt like my new best friend. I still remember that day like it was yesterday. Throughout the conference she would ask me how I was doing, which classes I had attended, and tell me how excited she was to have new volunteers in the field helping crime victims. Later that year I was hired full time as a victim assistance coordinator and would have many opportunities over the years to see her smile, listen to her encouragement, and get "jazzed" about the work we did on behalf of victims. Serving on the Victim Services Committee of the Texas District & County Attorney's Association with Suzanne was more than an honor; it was the chance of a lifetime. Suzanne was a walking encyclopedia of victim rights, issues, and resources, but she was more than that: she was the reason we do the work we do. Working under her extraordinary vision, love of life, and true caring for others was an opportunity for which I will always be grateful. Suzanne, we promise to continue the walk. I know we will see you along the way. I will miss you.

Suzanne's iconic smile during an award ceremony.

THE CHRISTI CENTER REMEMBERS SUZANNE MCDANIEL

Susan and Don Cox, Founders
The Christi Center

We knew Suzanne personally and professionally for over 24 years. She was a dignified and dedicated lady who began working with our organization, The Christi Center (formerly known as For the Love of Christi) in 1988. We are a grief support organization working to provide love, hope, comfort, and ongoing support to those adjusting to life after the death of a loved one. We provide training and education opportunities to the general public regarding grief and concerns of the bereaved. When Suzanne worked in the Governor's Office as the Director of the Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse, we contacted her many times for assistance. We also served together on several committees. She was an excellent speaker, a good writer, and she had the compassion to take the time to help many individuals and organizations.

In a letter from her, she wrote that we were two of her heroes. She said she watched as we grew from the tragedy of losing our 20 year-old daughter, Christi to become one of the most effective sources of help and fellowship in our community. Suzanne supported our organization and believed in our mission. We would not be where we are today without her.

Everyone will miss her beautiful smile, her compassion, and her tireless dedication to the victim services system. Her legacy lives on through our organization and all those hearts she touched during her lifetime.

UPCOMING MADD WALKS

El Paso	April 6
Dallas	April 27
Houston	May 18

New Challenges
National Crime Victims' Rights Week

New Solutions
April 21–27
2013

AUSTIN AREA EVENTS

APRIL 22 SUZANNE MCDANIEL MEMORIAL TREE PLANTING CEREMONY
Noon -1:00 PM - Texas State Capital Grounds (south lawn)

APRIL 22 SCREENING OF *HEAVEN'S RAIN* (parental discretion advised)
7:00 - 9:30 PM - Utopian Theater at the University of Texas

APRIL 23 ANNUAL CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS CEREMONY AND RECEPTION
7:00 - 8:30 PM - First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin

Calendar

APRIL

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

National Sexual Violence Resource Center - www.nsvrc.org/saam
Texas Association Against Sexual Asault - www.taasa.org

April 8-10
8th Annual Conference on Crimes Against Women
Sheraton Hotel, Dallas, TX
www.conferencecaw.org

April 16-18
13th International Family Justice Center Conference
Worthington Renaissance Hotel, Fort Worth, TX
www.familyjusticecenter.org/events.html

April 21
Galveston County DA's Office Victim Candlelight Vigil
Galveston, TX
For details call Rachel Leal at (409) 770-5124

Parker County NCRVW K-12 School Art Contest
For details contact lisa.mehrhoff@parkercountytx.com

April 22
Suzanne McDaniel Memorial Tree Planting
Texas State Capitol Building, Noon
Visit the TDCJ Victim Services website for information on Austin area events: www.tdcj.texas.gov/divisions/vs/

April 23
18th Annual Candlelight Vigil
Brazoria County Crime Victim Outreach Support Group
Angleton, TX
For more information call (979) 864-1230

April 23-24
"Every Victim, Every Time" Crime Victim Conference
College Station, TX
www.evetbv.org

APRIL (cont.)

April 24
Memorial Crime Victims' Brick Dedication and Proclamation
Dickinson, TX
For details contact Nelda Harles at (281) 337-4700 x317

April 26-27
10th Annual BIPP Statewide Conference
Austin, TX
https://donate.ncfv.org/10th_annual_BIPP_conference

April 27
NCVRW 1K Walk, 5K Run, and Activity Day
Friendswood, TX
For details call Rachel Leal at (409) 770-5124

MAY

May 7-10, 2013
Texas Victim Services Association (TVSA) Conference
The Pearl Hotel, South Padre Island
http://www.txvsa.org/

May 11-17 National Police Week

May 25 National Missing Children's Day

WE NEED TO GET THINGS DONE, AND I THINK YOU CAN HELP.

Amy Smith, Deputy Director
Harris County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council

Suzanne McDaniels with Nell Myers during Crime Victims' Rights Week

Suzanne McDaniel was a great woman. She was a pioneer in the Victim Services Field here in Texas, as well as throughout the nation. I remember the first day I met her in 1989 at the Crime Victim Clearinghouse Conference. I had just started in the Victim Witness Division of the Harris County District Attorney's Office. I had heard about how she started the program. I was impressed by all she had accomplished and thought she would be unapproachable. Boy was I wrong. She came right up to me and made such an impression with all her enthusiasm. She welcomed me into the Victim Services Field, saying, "We have a lot to accomplish so let's get started." Later we discovered we had both graduated from Southwestern University. From that moment on she took me under her wing and became the big sister I never had.

Suzanne was always available with advice and could talk me through any problem. When I became Director of the Harris County District Attorney's Office Victim Witness Division, Suzanne was my go-to person for advice on how to be a good supervisor. She also taught me how to work with prosecutors and get them to do the right thing even when they did not want to do it my way. No matter what city we were in, my favorite "therapy" sessions always involved margaritas and Mexican food.

Over the years Suzanne decided I needed to branch out and join her on some state-wide committees. As she always said, "We need to get some things done, and I think you can help." She suggested I join several committees at the Attorney General's Office, TDCAA, and the State Bar of Texas. There were days she would work me to the bone, but I knew that Suzanne's only motivation was to make sure the victims in the State of Texas were treated with respect, dignity, and fairness, and I knew with her we could truly make a difference.

Thank you Suzanne for making me the person I am today. You pushed, pulled, and shoved me into positions I did not think I could handle, but you were there every step of the way with love, support, and encouragement.

WELL DONE, MY GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT

Carol Vance, Former District Attorney in Harris County

Suzanne McDaniel was a special person and a good friend. Her mother and my mother were the closest of friends, so I knew her all her life. She always had that captivating smile. Suzanne would walk into a room, and the room would light up. She always had a compassionate heart for those who were hurting.

In 1975 when I was District Attorney in Harris County, I took advantage of federal grant money to start new and unusual initiatives against organized crime, consumer and commercial fraud, and so on. One such new addition to the office was the Victim Witness Assistance Section, the first in Texas and second in the country. When Suzanne heard that our office was undertaking this project, she immediately called me and told me the job was made to order for her.

continued on next page

continued from previous page

"Suzanne, we are plowing new ground. I don't even know where this is going," I told her.

"I know where it is going," she replied, "and I can run that office." So I hired her—and the rest is history.

Suzanne assumed command and hired three people, each of whom would serve the victim-witness needs for six criminal district courts. We had 18 courts, and they handled about 18,000 felonies per year. That's a lot of victims and witnesses. The prosecutors were snowed under and barely keeping their heads above water, so victims and witnesses received little attention in cases that did not go to trial. All that most of them wanted was basic information like when to show up for court and what to expect when they got there. A new experience at the courthouse can be scary. Our victim-witness operation got going and was such a success that most large jurisdictions in Texas put in for similar grants. Suzanne's operation became a role model for offices throughout the country as well as Texas. She gave generously of her time to help set up other new such offices. Suzanne excelled at this work and stayed in it the rest of her life. Along the way she received many awards. President Bill Clinton gave her the Crime Victim Service Award, and Congressman Ted Poe, a former chief prosecutor and judge, named the Congressional Victim Service Award, the "Suzanne McDaniel Award." The National District Attorneys Association (NDAA) gave her special recognition for her assistance to offices around the country.

Suzanne later moved to Austin and went on to work for the Texas Crime Victims Clearinghouse, a part of the Governor's Office. She later became the Crime Victim's Information Officer for the Attorney General's Office. Her last job—and a dream job it was—came along when Rob Kepple hired her to serve as TDCAA's liaison and representative for all victim assistance issues. Rob knew a superstar when he saw one.

She loved this work and loved her close friends on staff at TDCAA. What a way to close out such a productive and unselfish life helping others. We will all miss her. I can only imagine that Someone up there might be saying to Suzanne, "Well done, my good and faithful servant."

Originally published in Vol 42, No 4 of the Texas Prosecutor. *Republished with permission.*

SUZANNE'S ENTHUSIASM LIT UP EVERY ROOM SHE ENTERED.

Rob Kepple,
TDCAA Executive Director

More than one person will tell you that Suzanne was driven by her empathy for victims of crime and a vision to help them restore their lives. She served as the first victim-witness coordinator in Houston under legendary DA Carol Vance, doing back then what so many victim witness coordinators and other prosecutor staff do today: guide the victims of crime through the criminal justice maze, offering a comforting smile and a hand to hold.

In the early 1980s, the victims' rights movement began to pick up momentum, and as folks redoubled their commitment to victims of crime, Suzanne took her energy and enthusiasm for serving victims to a statewide level. I first met Suzanne in 1991 when she was the director of the Crime Victims Clearinghouse, and she played a major role in the policy discussions about where the victims' rights movement would go and how it would evolve. True to her roots, she always viewed prosecutors and the prosecutor's office as the key to a successful victim outreach.

Suzanne had the career we all hope to have, one full of meaning, purpose, and growth, where we might leave things better than we found them. But what struck me in all my occasions working with Suzanne was her loyalty. Loyalty to the mission of prosecutors, loyalty to prosecutors themselves, and loyalty to the office and staff. She always stood up for the work we do and made sure folks appreciated just how hard we work to protect and support the victims of crime. She did not tolerate people denigrating prosecutors' duties or demeaning our efforts. At times that was a lonely job, but she always spoke up for you.

I like to think that when Suzanne came to work for us at TDCAA, she had come home. Her enthusiasm for the new Victim Services Section and the work it is doing lit up every room she walked into. Suzanne, you've passed that enthusiasm on to us, and we all pledge to continue building what you have started.

Originally published in Vol 42, No 4 of the Texas Prosecutor. *Republished with permission.*

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU !

OUR GOAL IS TO PRINT NEWS OF INTEREST FOR VICTIMS AND VICTIM ADVOCATES

The Victim's Informer newsletter is published quarterly. Articles, meeting notices, and other submissions should be sent to TDCJ Victim Services Division, Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse, 8712 Shoal Creek Blvd, Suite 265, Austin, Texas 78757-6899; faxed to 512-452-0825; or e-mailed to tdcj.clearinghouse@tdcj.texas.gov. For questions or comments, please call us at 800-848-4284 or 512-406-5931.

Please Note:

You may access the publication at the TDCJ VSD Internet website. If you wish, we will notify you via e-mail each time *The Victim's Informer* becomes available on the TDCJ VSD Internet website and provide an electronic link to *The Victim's Informer*. Send your e-mail address to:
tdcj.clearinghouse@tdcj.texas.gov

Angie McCown, Director
Texas Department of Criminal Justice
Victim Services Division
victim.svc@tdcj.texas.gov
8712 Shoal Creek Blvd., Suite 265,
Austin, Texas 78757

WE FEEL CLOSE TO HER AS WE CONTINUE HER WORK ON BEHALF OF VICTIMS

Diane Beckham
Senior Staff Counsel, TDCAA

Paying tribute to my co-worker and friend Suzanne McDaniel is a daunting task. Her accomplishments and the awards and accolades given to her over the years are countless and impressive. The world lost a significant voice in the victim services community when Suzanne passed away last May after a stoic fight against pancreatic cancer.

But to measure Suzanne's life only by her substantial resume and impressively framed collection of honorary certificates stops short of the true measure of Suzanne. While we all mourn the loss of her work as a champion of victims' rights, there are many of us who mourn even more deeply the loss of a dear and irreplaceable friend.

Suzanne's best work as an advocate came in her one-on-one contact with others. Her warmth, compassion and unselfishness had a deep and lasting personal impact on countless people. She devoted her life to making other people feel better—not limited to the context of crime victims—and she always did it without fanfare or the need for personal recognition. After the best friend of one of our co-workers was killed in a domestic violence murder-suicide, Suzanne spent countless hours helping our co-worker through her grief and helping the out-of-state family of the victim find resources for assistance for themselves and for their now-orphaned grandchildren.

In 2010, when the Texas District & County Attorneys Association was looking to hire its first-ever Director of Victim Services, we quickly realized what a perfect fit Suzanne would be for the job. Her years of experience working both in a prosecutor's office and for state agencies and offices gave her an uncommonly broad understanding of issues related to victim services. Her warmth, good humor and willingness to help with any project, any time made her a beacon that drew in both TDCAA members and her fellow TDCAA staff members. She was the ideal representative of our association both in helping VACs with their job duties and in encouraging prosecutors to put their hearts into making sure victims' rights were implemented.

There are still days when I expect Suzanne to walk into my office, an ear-to-ear smile on her face and her warm eyes lit up, always starting by asking a question about me. Suzanne started every conversation by asking about you—a quality that seems too rare these days—and she listened closely to the answer. Even in the last months of her life, when she was clearly in pain, when asked how she was doing, Suzanne never answered any way other than to reply, "Doing OK!"

While we won't have the chance in this lifetime to have more conversations about topics ranging from the truly important to those that made us laugh until we cried (such as our mutual propensity to take spectacular pratfalls, always with an audience), I feel close to her when we continue the work on behalf of victims that she made her mission. And I hope she's smiling, now without the pain of cancer, when she sees how she inspired all of us and how beloved she will always be. ★