

The VICTIM'S INFORMER

TEXAS CRIME VICTIM CLEARINGHOUSE

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SEEK JUSTICE, ENSURE VICTIMS' RIGHTS, INSPIRE HOPE

By Angie McCown, Director
TDCJ Victim Services Division



National Crime Victims' Rights Week

April 19–25, 2020

I hope everyone's 2020 is off to a great start. In April we will once again commemorate National Crime Victim's Rights Week (NCVRW). This year's theme "Seek Justice, Ensure Victims' Rights, Inspire Hope" offers each of us the opportunity to examine what we as Texas citizens and criminal justice professionals are doing to support victims and advance victims' rights.

In the spirit of this theme, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Victim Services Division (VSD) is asking each of you to help us to be able to serve more victims by ensuring that they understand how to exercise their rights. One of the rights that crime victims have in Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Chapter 56, Article 56 is:

(7) the right to be informed, upon request, of parole procedures, to participate in the parole process, to be notified, if requested, of the parole proceedings concerning a defendant in the victims' case, to provide to the Board of Pardons and Paroles for inclusion in the defendant's file information to be considered by the Board prior to the parole of any defendant convicted of any crime subject to this subchapter, and to be notified, if requested, of the defendant's release.

We all need to inform victims that once an offender is sentenced to incarceration, and has been transferred from the county jail to TDCJ, their completed Victim Impact Statement (VIS) must be included in the court documents placed in the offender's penitentiary packet that is sent to TDCJ. If it is included, and if the victim selected to receive notifications on the VIS, then the victim will automatically be registered with TDCJ VSD in the [Integrated Victim Services System \(IVSS\)](#) to receive notifications so that they may exercise the above stated right.

The truth is very few VISs are forwarded to TDCJ by the local jurisdictions, and those victims may not receive the notifications to be able to protest parole or prepare a safety plan for an offender's release. It is important to let victims know that they may want to register through the IVSS portal and confirm that TDCJ VSD has received their VIS if they completed one.

I encourage everyone reading the Informer to think creatively about how you might engage your community to better support victims and advance victims' rights. Please join your community in commemorating NCVRW April 19-25, 2020.

"We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope."

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

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BIG CHANGES AT TBCJ!

Governor Abbott Appoints Three to Texas Board of Criminal Justice

by Derrelynn Perryman, Texas Board of Criminal Justice



Chairman Dale Wainwright is leaving the Texas Board of Criminal Justice as he has been appointed by the Governor as a Commissioner of the Texas Public Safety Commission, which oversees the Texas Department of Public Safety. It has been an honor and a privilege to work with

Chairman Wainwright these past four years to help ensure continuous improvement of both TDCJ and the Windham School District. We have gotten a lot done under his leadership and he will be missed, but I know he will serve as an excellent leader in his new role!

Board Member Patrick O'Daniel has been appointed as the new Chair of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice and the Windham School District. I know he will lead us to continue to move forward in making our agency even better at keeping Texas safe, rehabilitating offenders who will be returning to our communities, and supporting victims of crime. At the last meeting, I was elected by the Board as Vice Chairman. I am honored and humbled by this opportunity and look forward to this new role and responsibility and the chance to make a difference in new ways working alongside Chairman O'Daniel.

I am also very pleased to welcome three new members to the Texas Board of Criminal Justice. The new members will be coming in for outgoing Board members Terrell McCombs, Eric Gambrell, and Thomas Wingate, whose terms expired in February 2019. Governor Abbott's message:

Governor Greg Abbott has appointed Molly Francis, Faith Johnson, and Sichan Siv to the Texas Board of Criminal Justice

for terms set to expire on February 1, 2025.

Molly Francis is a retired senior judge with 28 years of judicial service, most recently on the Fifth Court of Appeals. She is a member of the State Bar of Texas and served as chair of the Judicial Selection Committee, former board member and current member of the Dallas Bar Association, and former chair of the Texas Center for the Judiciary. She is board certified in Criminal Law and Criminal Appellate Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. Francis received a Bachelor of Arts in History from Baylor University and a Juris Doctor degree from Baylor Law School.

Faith Johnson of Dallas is a partner at Stanton LLP. She previously served as Judge of the 363rd Judicial District Court and as Dallas County Criminal District Attorney. She is a member of the State Bar of Texas and the Dallas Bar Association and former member of the American Judges Association, Texas Public Safety Commission, Texas Department of Family & Protective

Services Board, Violent Gang Task Force, Dallas County Juvenile Board, and the State of Texas Committee on Judicial Ethics. Johnson received a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Master of Education in Community Counseling from Georgia State University and a Juris Doctor degree from Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law.

Sichan Siv of San Antonio is a former United States Ambassador to the United Nations and is an author. He also served as Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State. He is a Lieutenant Colonel in the Civil Air Patrol and a volunteer with the San Antonio Police Department. Siv received a Master of International Affairs from Columbia University.

Eric Nichols is a partner with Butler Snow LLP. He previously served as an Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of Texas and as Deputy Attorney General for Criminal Justice for the Office of Texas Attorney General. He is president

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NO TIME TO GRIEVE

A Story of Commitment, Perseverance, and Forgiveness

by Mike Jones, *Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse*

**“a heart that races so fast
it is only a heartbeat ahead of breaking-----”**



Amy Metcalf is a remarkable person. In an instant, her life is turned upside down. Her mother is dead, and her younger sister, Stephanie, clings to life. Almost all of Amy's energy and will is spent to help her sister through painful recovery. Amy's story is one of commitment, perseverance, and ultimately, forgiveness.

If you are a victim and reading this story, remember that you are not alone. There are others who feel similar loss, anger, confusion, frustration and despair. If you work with victims, remember, what may be an everyday task for you, could be a “huge deal” for the victim you are working with.

This article was originally published in The Victim's Informer, Volume 16, Number 3 | September/October 2011. It has been updated.

No Time to Grieve

On July 13, 2003, two days before Hurricane Claudette made landfall at Port O'Conner, Texas, the National Weather Service issued a hurricane warning from Baffin Bay to High Island. The remainder of the Texas coastline was under a hurricane watch.

Stephanie and a high school friend were on summer vacation on South Padre Island. (She was there with her and Amy's mom, Donna Borden, and their step-father.) With Hurricane Claudette looming, the four leave the island that evening for Amy's house in Whitehouse, near Tyler. The nine-hour drive would take them through Houston, then north along Interstate 45 to Corsicana, where they would go east on State Highway 31E through Athens. At around 9:00 am on the morning of July 14th, they would be passing through Brownsboro, about 30 minutes from Amy's house, where she was waiting.

Traveling west on SH 31E that morning were two eighteen-year old girls who had spent the last two days bingeing on crystal meth. Speeding along at an estimated 90 miles an hour, both girls were high and passed out. Amy and Stephanie's step-father, driving at the posted speed limit of 70, sees the oncoming car drift into his lane, so he swerves to his left to avoid them. SH 31E just east of Brownsboro has a paved left turn lane between the east and westbound lanes. If the passenger in the oncoming car had remained unconscious, the two cars would have sped by each other, and the two unconscious girls would have careened into the trees lining the highway, their fate unpredictable. Amy and Stephanie's step-father could have regained his course and stopped safely. Instead, the unconscious passenger woke up, saw what was happening, and yanked the steering wheel to the right; the car crashed into the front passenger side door of Amy and Stephanie's step-father's car.

The force of the impact suffered by these two vehicles is indescribable. In the front passenger seat, Donna Borden is killed instantly. Seated in the right back seat, Stephanie suffers life-threatening injuries to her crushed body. Her friend, who is on the other side of the back seat, suffers significant brain trauma. The passenger in the other car is seriously injured. Although hospitalized, Amy and Stephanie's step-father, along with the intoxicated driver of the other car, somehow avoid serious injury.

On the morning of the crash, Amy is at work. Outgoing and confident, she is perfect for the marketing job she holds at a large Tyler hotel. The work at the crash site is difficult, delicate, and slow. Around noon she receives a call from the East Texas Medical Center in Tyler. The person on the phone is asking Amy who her sister is; they have different last names. Not much is making sense to Amy. When she

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Quote above is from the poem, “Summer Story,” by Mary Oliver

hero: a person who, in the opinion of others, has heroic qualities or has performed a heroic act and is regarded as a model or ideal.

hears the words, “about South Padre,” an empty, horrible feeling begins to quickly sink in.

When Amy arrives at the hospital, she is confused and frantic, fearing the worst. The man at the information desk is on the phone. Amy hears him tell someone, “She’s here.” Hospital officials have been waiting for her. She is taken to “the tiny room,” and when a hospital chaplain enters, Amy loses it. She is told about her mom and prepared for the condition that Stephanie is in.

In critical condition, Stephanie is in Intensive Care, where she will stay for weeks. When Amy arrives, Stephanie is asking about their mom and about her friend. The “hardest thing” for Amy to do now is to tell Stephanie what has happened. Amy cannot hug her sister; her battered body is just too frail. In the many, many weeks to come, Stephanie would nearly lose her battle for life on several occasions.

It would be days before Amy would find any sleep. There was no time to grieve. Funeral arrangements had to be made. Stephanie, their mom and step-father

lived in Gainesville, about three hours from Tyler. They were on their way to pick up a niece from Amy’s house at the time of the wreck. There was no way Amy was going to leave Stephanie alone. Amy and Stephanie’s father had arrived to stay with Stephanie, so Amy made the difficult choice to attend her mother’s funeral in Gainesville.

Living the Wreck

Amy “lived the wreck” for the next two years. After weeks in ICU, Stephanie is stable enough for a regular room. Her pelvis is crushed, but is not strong enough to endure any surgery that would mend it. The doctor tells Amy that Stephanie must remain flat on her back for at least the next four months. When Amy’s husband, Michael, arrives, she tells him that Stephanie is going to be in the hospital for the next four months. “That’s not what I said,” the doctor tells her.

Stephanie will remain flat on her back, yes, but not at the hospital. She should go home or be moved to a nursing home. For Amy, a nursing home was not an option. With her mother now dead, there was no way for Stephanie to go home either. She would come to stay at Amy’s house.

Amy and her family were living in a small rented house, and to take care of her sister, Amy had walked away from her job. She and Michael had been saving to build their own house. It was

designed, and construction was planned to begin soon. There was also Amy’s five-year-old son and one-year-old daughter to consider. That weekend Amy and Michael found there was only one house for rent in Whitehouse that would accommodate their needs. It was perfect, except that the rent was twice what they currently paid, and now they had lost half their income.

The next two years would be anything but typical. The routine of the days would meld together. What follows did not happen on any particular day, but within the framework of a day. Amy cannot remember a specific day or a specific date. Stephanie fights to survive and heal. Almost all of Amy’s energy and will is expended to help Stephanie.

Some of the things that violent crime takes from a person are not always apparent or tangible at the time. Amy sadly admits that she doesn’t really remember the second year of her own daughter’s life.

Stephanie Moves In

Amy vividly remembers the intense nausea she felt when she heard the “beep” of the ambulance as it backed into her driveway. She did not know what to expect at this point. Stephanie tried to be a good patient, but she was seventeen, confined, and in chronic pain. She never wanted to be alone. The body continues to function, even during confined healing. Solid foods and liquids are processed. Pain medications wreak havoc on the digestive systems. What level of trust and surrender it takes to be cared for; what grace to take care of someone. Few people, other than doctors and scientists perhaps, regard the

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The remains of Amy’s step-father’s Ford Taurus.

nature of our own bodies to be anything but private.

Amy's husband, Michael, deserves his own credit. He never knew what to expect when he got home from work each day. From the onset he never flinched. He adjusted; he picked up the slack. The family had no diet plan; there was only getting stuff to eat as necessary. Their savings and hopes for a home dwindled. The path of their future was very unpredictable. It was day-to-day.

Stephanie's condition improved, but it was a long, slow process. She would get infections, and there was the confinement and the pain to deal with. Going to the doctor was an ordeal; Amy had to arrange for an ambulance to get her there and back. Everything was a battle; everything was a process.

At the time of her death, Stephanie's mom had full custody of her; her father hadn't really been in the picture. Bureaucracy offered Amy very little without struggle. Amy spent hours a day on the phone wrestling with inflexible red tape. She dealt with the hospital, emergency services, social security and insurance companies. Since no one ever called her to offer assistance or direction, she called them. Every day she made calls. On Stephanie's behalf, she worked with Crime Victims' Compensation; they needed Stephanie's medical reports. There were boxes of medical reports. It was impossible not to wonder why they deserved any of this. Amy kept thinking to herself, "We didn't do anything wrong."

Each day Stephanie continued to heal. For months she had the small comfort of routine sponge baths. When she finally was able to sit up, Amy got her a blow up sink. After she started shampooing Stephanie's hair, Amy discovered that

Stephanie still had dried blood in her hair. For weeks, Amy would continue to pick blood and glass out of Stephanie's hair and from under the skin on her head and arms. Much of the time she was on pain medication. She had regular in-patient and out-patient physical therapy to endure. At night anxiety would set in. Even though she has no memory of the "Life Flight," every so often she would "hear" the helicopter.

When she was able, Stephanie took short breaks out of her bed with the aid of a lift chair. Now and then friends from her hometown of Gainesville would show up and spend the weekend with her. Amy's grandmother, a retired registered nurse, came and stayed for a while as well. These respites allowed Amy to leave the room for more extended periods ... to do laundry, fight the bureaucratic battles, and visit with her family. All the while, Amy was waiting to hear anything about the intoxicated driver who caused all of this.

Because the wreck happened in Brownsboro, which is in Henderson County, all court matters would take place in Athens, about an hour away from Amy. Going to a hearing was a "huge deal." Amy just couldn't leave; she had to arrange for someone to come out and stay with Stephanie.

The intoxicated driver, "Claire," had been arrested and quickly bonded out. Amy would call and find out about a scheduled hearing. After she was confident Stephanie was in good hands, she would drive to Athens, only to find out very often that the hearing had been reset. Some hearings were conducted, so that Claire's

court-appointed attorney could request additional funds for her defense, which were summarily granted.

Amy remembers Claire's demeanor in the court room; she acted like she was "put out" by having to come to court. It seemed so easy for her to get additional money for her legal fees, while Amy was worried about how they were going to pay the

month's rent. It also appeared to Amy that Claire was still using drugs.

Amy and Stephanie's older sister, Lisa, planned to come down from Missouri to attend one hearing. Money was tight, and she could afford only one flight to Texas. While she was at the airport in Dallas waiting to be picked up, Amy

had to call her and tell her that the hearing had been canceled. Weeks later, in order to attend another hearing, Amy had to make all the complicated arrangements for someone to come and care for Stephanie. While in the courtroom, she was told the judge was not going to hear the case. At that point, the months of pain, frustration, and struggle caught up with her, and she lost her temper at the courthouse.

Finally, in June 2005, Claire appeared in court and pleaded guilty. On the stand she talked about what she had been doing the days before the wreck. In the end, she received a sentence of seven years: three intoxication assault and one intoxication manslaughter convictions to run concurrently. After the judge announced the sentence, "Claire" seemed bewildered to have received prison time, saying, "But I said I was sorry." After she was handcuffed and escorted out of the courtroom, Amy felt it was the first time she had breathed in

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years. At the same time, there really wasn't any satisfaction either.

Finding a New Normal

Amy's last task for Stephanie was to help her fulfill her goal of graduating from high school and walking across the stage with her class. The first weeks after the wreck, no one knew if she would survive, and many believed she would never walk again. Amy received Stephanie's class



Donna Borden's cross on SH 31E near Brownsboro, Texas.

assignments. Still on pain medication and unable to write, Amy was Stephanie's teacher, her reader, and her scribe. With Amy's help, Stephanie achieved the credits she needed to graduate and she did walk across the stage with her high school class.

Almost a year after the wreck, Stephanie went home to Gainesville, but since her mother was gone, home was not the same. She moved back to the Tyler area and attended college. She also started dating someone. Today, Stephanie still bears the visible scars of her ordeal. Now in her twenties, she endures the pain of arthritis more prevalent in someone much older. She got married, has two kids of her own, and is on her way to finding her "new normal."

After Stephanie moved out, Amy was in limbo. She had no job, and her purpose for the last two years was now on her own. She was emotionally drained and lacked the spirit and confidence she once had. Gradually, she learned that it was OK to take care of herself again. She started working at her church. It was a supportive atmosphere and adequately "low pressure." She began to rebuild her confidence.

Finding themselves on the road to their "new normal," Amy and Michael refocused their goal of building their home. With their savings depleted, they went to the bank to find out what they needed to do to build. They were told they needed more income and more savings – or less house. Since her mother had designed the house, that was not an option.

Inexplicably, one day Michael was called into his manager's office. He got a raise. Not long after that, a representative from Crime Victims' Compensation called. Amy had forgotten about filing a particular claim, but now it had been processed. She learned that she would be receiving partial income reimbursement for the past two years. She still remembers the exact amount to the penny of that check.

Her step-father, a home builder, took a year – at a discount rate – to build Amy and Michael's new house. Donna Borden loved hummingbirds and had feeders for them at her home in Gainesville. Etched into the concrete floor in the foyer of the new house is a hummingbird, colored in the birthstone hues of Amy, Stephanie, and Lisa.

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of the American Inns of Court – Barbara Jordan Inn and fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers, Texas Bar Foundation, and Austin Bar Foundation. He is a member of the American Board of Trial Advocates and the State Bar of Texas. He has served as chair of the Texas Supreme Court's Grievance Oversight Committee and is a trustee with the University of Texas Law School Foundation. Nichols received a Bachelor

of Arts in English and History from the University of Virginia and a Juris Doctor degree from The University of Texas School of Law.

We on the Board appreciate and value the lasting and substantial contributions of Chairman Wainwright and the outgoing Board Members, and we will miss them. Stay tuned – many great things ahead!

Along the Road Robert Browning (1812-1889)

I WALKED a mile with Pleasure;
She chattered all the way,
But left me none the wiser
For all she had to say.

I walked a mile with Sorrow
And ne'er a word said she;
But oh, the things I learned from her
When Sorrow walked with me!

TEXAS LEGENDS IN VICTIM SERVICES

Dotti Walker

by Mike Jones, Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse



Since the Crime Victims' Bill of Rights passed into law in Texas in 1985, victims' capacity to participate in the criminal justice process has come a long way. As a progressive national leader, Texas has often paved the way to provide rights, programs, and services for our citizens who become victims of crime. However, this has not always been the case.

This is the first article in the series, "Texas Legends in Victim Services." During the early days of the Victim Rights Movement, when crime victims had virtually no role in the criminal justice process, these legends rarely took no for an answer. Through their dedication and perseverance, crime victims' fundamental rights to be informed, to be heard, and to participate in the criminal justice process have evolved into what they are today.

Whether it's a package of her famous fudge or a recipe from her cookbook, *A Pinch of Salt, a Tump of Flour*, you rarely leave empty handed when you meet with Dotti Walker. In my case, it was a recipe for "Good-bye Turkey Casserole," a solar-powered Crush Light, a jar of fig preserves, and a jar of pepper jelly. Dotti is one of the most fun, caring, and generous people you could ever meet. For years she was an uplifting pillar at the annual Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse Conferences, and because of her fundraising efforts, many victims were able to attend the conferences at no cost.

Growing up in Mobile, Alabama, Dotti became interested in photography. From the time she was a young girl, she said, "her whole life she wanted to be a professional photographer and have a little boy." Although Houston was not a part of her plans, her dreams would take shape there later on. In 1974, while working as

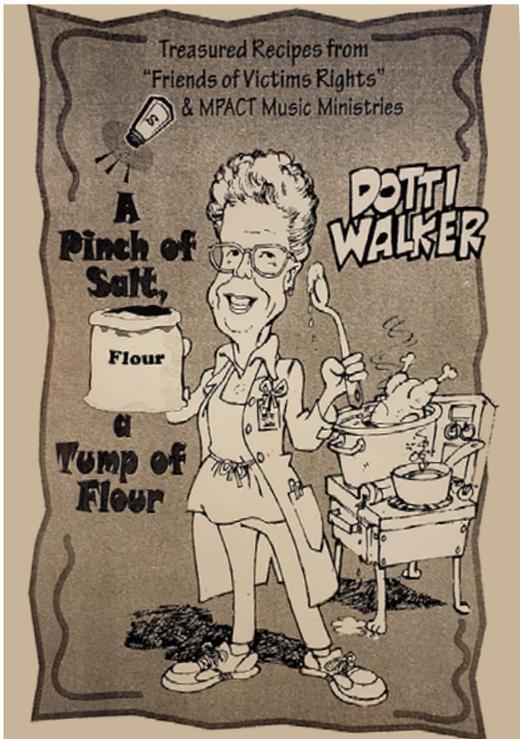
a waitress for Red Lobster in Mobile, she and a coworker were asked to relocate to a restaurant opening in Dallas. On the way to Dallas, they stopped in Houston to stay with a friend of her coworker. Although they only planned to stay for a week in Houston, Dotti never left.

After settling in Houston, she got a job working in a bar. From time to time some of the bar's customers would run into financial trouble, and other bar customers would step up with a few bucks to help them out. Dotti was the trusted money handler. Someone would need help with rent, a car payment, or groceries and tell Dotti. She'd pass along the news, and another customer who could spare it, would leave the money with Dotti. She'd hold on to the money and give it to the person needing it when he or she came by. When the person was able to repay the loan, the transactions would occur in reverse order.

One day a man came into the bar and told Dotti, "I've come for your money." Thinking he was at the bar to receive or repay a loan, she happily told him to hold on while she got it. Unexpectedly, the man followed her behind the bar. With her unique, hybrid Alabama/Texas twang, she told the man, "Honey, you can't come behind the bar. It's against the law!" When she went to pat the man on his hand, she realized he had a gun and knew he wasn't there for a loan!

After her stint at the bar, Dotti began working as a photographer around the Houston area. In 1990 she began working as a research photographer for the University of Texas Medical School in Houston, eventually retiring in 2000. Dotti's dream of having a little boy had come true in January 1958, when her son Johnny was born in Mobile, Alabama. Sadly, on August 26, 1992 in Houston, Johnny was murdered.

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Dotti and the Ironing Board Brigade sold hundreds of these cookbooks over the years, raising vital funds to help victims. You can find, "Good-Bye Turkey Casserole," on page 21, right between "Taco Casserole" and Aunt Marion's, "Oklahoma Chicken."

Johnny was a large man with a big heart. At six feet, four inches and 220 pounds, he stood out in a crowd. Like Dotti, he liked to help others out, and according to Dotti, that is what got him into trouble.

Johnny met Tommy Lee Reissig, and the two became friends. Reissig had a troubled childhood and for most of his early life had been in and out of the system. Johnny took him in and gave him a job. Johnny's grandparents even treated Reissig like a son and had often let him stay at their home. After a while, Johnny became concerned about Reissig's behavior, and it got to the point where he wanted to cut him loose. On the evening of August 25th, Johnny went to visit with Dotti to talk about what to do about Tommy. It would be the last time they ever saw each other.

At the time, Hurricane Andrew was strengthening and heading straight for the Gulf of Mexico. With the possibility of the looming storm making landfall near Houston, Johnny decided not to make Reissig leave. The next day the two got into an argument, and Reissig stabbed Johnny, leaving him to bleed to death. Incidentally, Hurricane Andrew spared Texas and struck southern Florida and Louisiana before turning north and eventually dissipating.

Wanting something to numb her pain after Johnny's murder, Dotti "crawled into a bottle of bourbon." Eventually, she got to a point where she told herself that she could either die or pick herself up.

Even though crime victim rights became part of Texas law and the "Bill of Rights" was added to the Texas Constitution, for a number of reasons in the early days, those rights were not always afforded to victims like Dotti.

Socially outgoing, Dotti knows no strangers and has always had her own esoteric way of doing things. More often than not, socially-accepted protocols and boundaries have been hers to test. At six feet tall with a radiant smile, she has been described as a, "compassionate, energy-filled dynamo." But dynamos are not always welcomed in court rooms.

Fearing that her son's murderer would be offered a plea bargain which could result in a short sentence or even probation, Dotti got busy and got involved. She thought it was unfair that defendants' families, even if openly emotional, were allowed to remain in court during trials, yet she was usually prohibited from the proceedings.

Since she was mostly banned from the courtroom, she initiated the first of many petition-signing campaigns that would make her famous. For Reissig's trial, she collected the signatures of over 2,500 people who urged the court to impose a just sentence. Dotti says that just doing *something* helped her feel like she had some kind of control over what would happen. Tommy Reissig was convicted of murder and sentenced to serve 60 years.

After Johnny's murder, Dotti became involved with Parents of Murdered Children (POMC). Feeling empowered by her experiences with the criminal justice system, she would serve POMC for many years, helping countless other victims through their difficult times.

Teaming up with a close friend of Johnny's, Nanette Van Ostrom, and others, she formed a victims' advocacy group in true Dotti Walker fashion. With the mission of, "Pressing for Victims' Rights and Ironing out the Wrinkles of the Criminal Justice System," the Ironing Board Brigade was born. More than symbolic, the ironing boards performed a pragmatic function as well: they were used as platforms on which to sign petitions for court cases and for national victim rights, and they were used to sell jams and jellies and Dotti's

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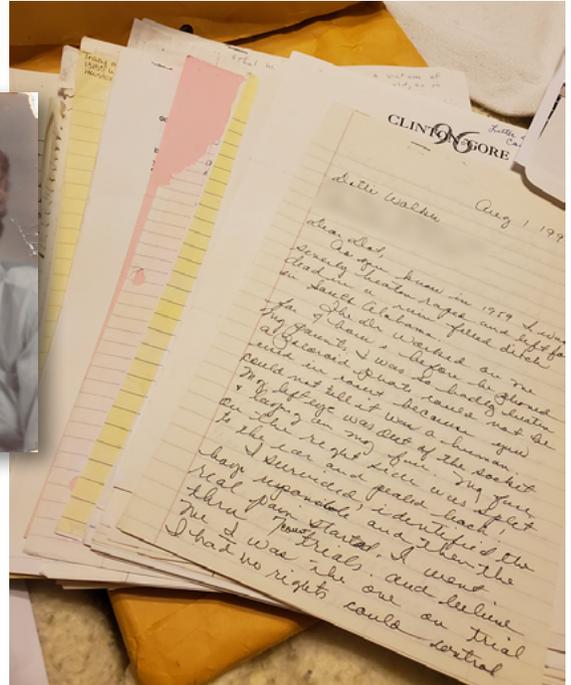


Governor Ann Richards and Dotti at a victims' rights rally in Houston.

iconic cookbook to raise vital funds that helped other victims as well as victim support programs.

Over the years, Dotti became notorious for how she attracts attention for her heartfelt victim projects. Her unorthodox tactics – that most people might not dare to try – have garnered her cause widespread and positive support. In almost everything you read about Dotti from the years of media

attention, someone will always mention her infectious smile and southern charm, her funny idioms, and her genuine concern for crime victims everywhere.



Above: Johnny and Dotti in 1966; Right: A stack of thank you letters from many of the victims Dotti has helped over the years.



"I get out there and fight on because there are more victims I can help ... To me, it's my last gift to my son — to fight for victims' rights."
 —Dotti Walker

Above: In this undated newspaper article, Dotti sums up her life mission.



OKLAHOMA CITY BOMBING VICTIM'S MOTHER, Marsha Kite, left, with Dotti Walker, center, whose family is from Washington County. At right is Deborah Spungen, whose daughter was murdered. Marsha Kite's daughter died in the Oklahoma City bombing and Dotti Walker's son was murdered. All are members of the "Ironing Board Brigade" that is seeking an amendment to the U.S. Constitution for victims' rights.

Above: At the beginning, Dotti just simply did not want to be ignored. Before long, she and the Ironing Board Brigade would be speaking for thousands like her nationwide.



Left: Just a couple of the many awards of recognition and appreciation that Dotti has received over the years, including one from the 2006 Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse Conference. Dotti also served on then-Governor Bush's Advisory Council on Crime.



UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA

and its Impact on the Brain and Behavior

by Julie Sengstacken, MS, BSN, RN, CPHQ, Katelynne Gonzalez, MA, LPC Intern, and Jennifer Peuplie, MBA
Texas Forensic Nurse Examiners

As we strive for a deeper understanding about the effects of the trauma experienced by survivors of sexual and interpersonal violence, we call on neurobiology, human development concepts, and direct advocacy experience to drive our approach. Trauma-informed care involves the understanding of stress responses and likely responses following a traumatic event. Those who make their life's work about assisting victims

need to understand how trauma can affect treatment presentation, engagement, and the outcome of supportive services. According to psychologist Rebecca Campbell, victims may experience additional stress and trauma, or secondary victimization, when they are unable to access needed services or when they have negative interactions with providers.

When providing supportive services to victims, it is important to start by focusing on the establishment of trust and safety. Following a traumatic event, the brain has difficulty recognizing a return to safety; remaining on constant high-alert and causing victims to feel uneasy in a situation which normally would be viewed as safe (Van der Kolk, 2015). All persons, regardless of past or current victimization status, have needs that must be met in order for them to survive and thrive (National Criminal Justice Reference Service, Vasquez & Houston-Kolnik 2017). Addressing a victim's core needs is paramount, as evidenced by work done by Abraham Maslow in 1942 when he introduced his hierarchy of needs in an effort to illustrate an individual's need to satisfy one's foundational needs before focusing on higher-level needs.

Advocacy services focus to empower and assist victims to meet their most basic, or physiological needs, while also working to respond to threats to safety resulting from their victimization. On what is likely one of the worst days of their lives, victims are

feeling vulnerable and a sense of chaos. Advocates must be prepared to meet victims where they are "in the moment." They may have scattered thoughts or feel the need to verbalize about portions of the event repetitively. Following a traumatic event, the part of the brain which filters out redundant information can become dysfunctional, making it difficult for individuals to both focus on the present and engage in normal, everyday tasks (Van der Kolk, 2015). One might assume their most pressing need is to talk through the recent trauma – but the victim may be most worried about who could pick up their second grader from school in an hour. Assuring you are meeting victims, "where they are at," involves listening, empathy, and supporting the victim about their immediate concerns. This is a time for calmness, perhaps sitting with the victim in silence, validating physical comfort and avoiding overstimulation in the environment.



When Tom Tremblay started working for the police department of Burlington, Vermont, 30 years ago, he discovered that many of his fellow cops rarely believed a rape victim. This was true time after time, in dozens of cases. Tremblay could see why they were doubtful once he started interviewing the victims himself. The victims, most of them women, often had trouble recalling an attack or couldn't give a chronological account of it. Some expressed no emotion.

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Others smiled or laughed as they described being assaulted (Ruiz, 2013).

In reality, only about two to eight percent of police reports are false. Why then are so many victims not believed? Neuroscience helps explain this troubling phenomenon. Walter Cannon, a neurologist and physiology professor at Harvard Medical School, identified two acute stress responses: fight or flight. “Flight” may be described as running from a threat, and “Fight” may be defined as confronting the threat aggressively. Trauma specialists have since expanded the acute stress response to include “Freeze” and “Fawn.”

“Freeze” involves an inability to move or act against the threat, while “Fawn” is a trauma response complying with the attacker to save ourselves. “When a significant stressor occurs, the hippocampus (involved in processing memory) and the amygdala (involved in processing emotions) are flooded with stress hormones (Heim et al., 2009).” Frequently advocates or medical professionals hear victims blaming themselves for not fighting back during their attack, not being able to remember exactly what happened, and robotically doing what their attacker asks in order to survive. Those facing assault become distressed, triggering a cascade of neurotransmitters and stress hormones. “This chemical flood impairs the prefrontal cortex of the brain, impeding victims’ capacity for rational thought and interferes with their memory” (Yoffee, 2017). Victims

frequently report feeling “numb,” or disengaged from their body. The result of this is having an overall dulled sense of feeling, not only towards themselves, but to all emotional experiences, including positive experiences (Van der Kolk, 2015). This neurological phenomenon may lead those with less experience or cognitive bias to view the victim as untruthful or lend doubt to the story because of the victim’s inability to coherently recall specifics or display emotions thought to be appropriate to the situation.

Clearly, understanding the neurobiology of trauma and taking the time to establish a relationship with the victim pays dividends as the advocate moves to the next stages of assuring safety planning and assessing their sometimes complex and multifaceted ongoing needs such as housing, counseling, etc. Successful case management requires a strategy designed to meet a victim’s fundamental, presenting, and ongoing needs so victims can realize recovery. The goal is to provide information, insight, and perspective to increase awareness and support for victims of trauma. Hopefully, a deeper understanding of innate neurological reactions to interpersonal violence, the impact of trauma, as well as the positive impact of supportive services will empower victims, caregivers, and the victim service community as a whole.

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We learn to punch sharks in the nose.
We never punch dolphins in the nose.
Abusers are sharks disguised as dolphins.

During his workshop, “The Neurobiology of Trauma: Focusing on Intimate Terrorism,” at the 2019 NOVA Annual Training Event in Phoenix, Dr. Chris Wilson told a story about a young

girl in Australia who wanted to learn how to surf. Her father, an experienced surfer, told her that to surf you have to get into the water, and there are sharks in the water. To repel shark attacks, surfers know to punch them in the nose! The girl was asked what to do if she encountered a dolphin, but maybe at first thought it was a shark. Do you punch it in the nose? Adament, she said, “We never punch dolphins in the nose!”

MOVING BEYOND SANE

How Forensic Nurses Close the Gap for Victims & Community Partners

by Khara Breeden, DNP, MS, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P, AFN-BC, Rachelle Gleason, BSN, RN, SANE-A, SANE-P, and Julie Sengstacken, MS, BSN, RN, CPHQ
Texas Forensic Nurse Examiners

Forensic nursing is a specialized area of nursing that focuses on patient populations that are affected by violence and trauma – across the lifespan and in diverse practice settings (ANA & IAFN, 2017). Forensic nursing emerged in the United States in the 1970s and has primarily been recognized for their role as the Sexual

Assault Nurse Examiner or SANE. Though this particular area of forensic nursing greatly impacted our specialty recognition, there is so much more that the forensic nurse is capable of that can positively impact victim services, legal entities, and the community overall.

The medical forensic exam conducted by the forensic nurse can benefit all victims of violence but especially those impacted by domestic violence, strangulation, human trafficking, child and elder abuse and can even impact the care of the suspect. Medical forensic services are proven, in literature, to be an important link between the victim and other services and entities, including law enforcement and the advocacy community. Studies have also demonstrated an improved patient experience when specially-trained forensic nurses are used to provide care to this special population (Campbell, Patterson & Lichty, 2005).

With regard to the judicial process, sexual assault cases progress further in the criminal justice system when SANEs have been used and survivors experience more positive criminal justice outcomes (e.g. guilty pleas, convictions) (Campbell, Patterson, & Bybee, 2012). Similarly, victims who received advocacy services reported being more comfortable and willing to reach out for help, had increased knowledge of available resources and were more hopeful about the future (Lyon, Lane & Menard, 2008).

The forensic nurse has a unique role and has a significant impact on the collaboration within systems, such as healthcare, advocacy or social services, and legal systems. Forensic nurses are able to assist with interpretation of clinical presentation and pathologies, describe the scientific relationship between injury and evidence, and assist with the explanation of the impact of trauma that victims endure that can impact behavior and overall response (ANA & IAFN, 2017).

Although they can be beneficial for all patients affected by violence, the medical forensic exam is a mystery often questioned by victims as well as community partners. The medical forensic exam can be broken down into seven parts:

1. **Informed Consent:** This step empowers the patient and helps restore his or her sense of control over the situation. Every step of the exam allows the patient the opportunity to consent or decline. Consent is a continual process throughout the entire exam. In order to provide consent, an individual has to be alert, oriented, and be able to

participate in an exam. If for any reason there is a variable to this criterion, such as minor victims or those with cognitive or physical disabilities, the highly-trained forensic nurse is able to navigate and determine how to proceed based on federal and state consent regulations.

2. **History:** The history includes the past medical history as well as the history of the event in the patient's words. This is the most important piece of the exam. It allows the patient the power to verbalize his or her trauma, as well as guide the nurse during the exam to know where to look for trauma, disease process, and possible sources for DNA collection.

3. **Detailed physical assessment:** This is the part of the exam that allows for the nurse to complete a thorough evaluation of the patient's body. Forensic nurses go beyond basic assessment skills and provide an in-depth evaluation from head to toe, using keen skills which involve inspection, palpation, and other assessment techniques, to determine if there are any injuries or medical needs. Frequently, when patients have experienced trauma, they are in the

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protective states of fight, flight, or freeze, which causes an increase in adrenaline and limits the ability to process pain and injury. Often, the patients have not expressed the feeling of pain and it is discovered as the nurse is progressing through the exam.

4. Detailed genital assessment: This step is only applicable to those individuals who have experienced an unwanted sexual encounter, so therefore is not included in every medical forensic exam. This portion of the assessment can sometimes trigger difficult emotions for the patient due to the sensitive nature of their trauma. The forensic nurse can help calm the patient if needed and continue to evaluate the ano-genitalia region for trauma, disease processes, including sexually transmitted infections, and collect DNA samples, if applicable.

5. Evidence Collection: As the forensic nurse advances through the exam, evidence collection is completed along the way. Evidence collection includes the patient history, physical evidence from the body and clothing, as well as forensic photography.

6. Additional medical treatment and medication administration: Through the thorough assessment by the forensic nurse and medical team, recommendations for medical treatment are identified. For example, if a patient is strangled during the event, a CT scan may be recommended, according to best practice guidelines. Treatment and testing for sexually-transmitted infections and HIV are considered. Pregnancy is also a concern for females that have been victims of sexual assault and prophylactic options may be discussed and offered. Medical well-being is a huge concern for patients who have endured physical or sexual violence or both, and a thorough

evaluation provides a peace of mind and confidence for the survivor as they look towards healing.

7. Discharge and safety planning: At the end of the exam the patient, the forensic nurse, and the advocate work together to determine a discharge plan with the primary goal of safety. After safety is evaluated, the discharge plan includes follow up recommendations for counseling, additional medical care and treatment, and involvement with other community partners for assistance with specialized issues such as immigration issues, counseling and continued support.

As crucial as these services are, forensic nursing services have posed a significant challenge for hospitals and communities as programs require expertise in understanding and coordination for proper management. Additional barriers, such as funding, reimbursement, and staffing all create issues related to sustainability as there is minimal reimbursement for hospitals that commit to caring for victims of sexual assault, and no reimbursement for forensic nursing costs for victims of other types of violence, which creates little incentive for hospitals to pour resources into robust program development (Maier, 2012).

In an effort to alleviate some of these barriers and to expand services in Southeast Texas, Texas Forensic Nurse Examiners (TxFNE) was developed to address the gap in patient services. TxFNE is a nonprofit organization and has created a community-based model that focuses on making services easily accessible to all victims of violence in the community, meeting the patient where they are. TxFNE provides medical forensic exams for all victims of violence at no cost to the victim in a variety of settings, including our TxFNE clinic settings,

our women's advocacy centers, college university campuses, and several hospital systems within Harris and surrounding counties. This model decreases the burden on hospital systems, and essentially allows for a community-driven model that all community partners contribute to and benefit from. TxFNE's focus always remains on the victim/survivor and aiding him or her to a path of healing and recovery. The services that the highly trained staff of TxFNE provide, initiate life altering experiences for all those they encounter. Each interaction of the medical forensic exam promotes healing and empowerment for long term optimal recovery.

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GENESIS TO REVELATION

My Story of Abuse by My Pastor and Counselor

by Patti Koo, San Antonio

In the beginning, there were five visits to a counselor and pastor (KW), whom I would later report to law enforcement as a sexual predator. The visits began in September 2000 after my husband and I discussed that our long-time pastor would be the right person for me to see for counseling. After all, we knew him well from church. We trusted him. I was depressed after

His narcissistic, manic-like personality matched that of a con artist but it also fit a passionate preacher that people were drawn to for spiritual enlivenment. With his up-close and personal style of preaching and teaching, he swooped in like a “savior” of sorts, after our long-time favorite associate pastor resigned. KW preached on Sundays, taught Bible study on weekdays, led healing services, visited the sick and the dying, and worked with youth events. All of us at church called him our pastor. He worked every day of the week, making himself available at all times.

It was years after my abuse that I recognized his words and actions as grooming. He set us up to trust and defend him. The grooming hides the red flags, but people also want to trust the integrity of their spiritual leader.

With a mix of confidence and self-deprecating insecurity, KW roped us in with scripture-based preaching, reminding

us that God especially loves the imperfect and damaged ones. As a crafted storyteller, he appeared unrehearsed and transparent.

KW did come with a sketchy past.

Although he spoke openly about his past drug and alcohol abuse, we did not know the details. We knew he was in a near death motor vehicle accident that scarred his arm. There were bits of information leaked about his past. He had stolen money at his last church and had not paid restitution. He offered to pay the church back but was told not to pay – just leave.

He said he had to forfeit his ordination in the Baptist church, so that he could enter the Presbyterian ordination process. This “pity me” pitch worked on many of us from the congregation, as we continued to trust KW. In hindsight, it is clear that he was a “master manipulator” and had a master plan to dupe our congregation.

an overseas family trip, during which communication between my husband and me was strained. I was a bit nervous; I had never been to a counselor before, but I felt I needed some trusted guidance for our marriage. We had been married for 19 years, but we were on autopilot, with both of us working full time and staying active in our daughters’ busy lives.

In Texas, 5.7 percent of males and 4.8 percent of females report they have been sexually assaulted by a person of authority sometime in their lives.*

The official Presbyterian mandate stated that KW could not complete his ordination nor stay as pastor. Unfortunately, the entire congregation was not informed

about his past violations, so we saw this mandate as an abandonment, and the traumatic bonding between our congregation and the “bereaved preacher” was sealed.

One of the elders started a letter-writing campaign to protest the verdict that KW

had to leave and could not be ordained. There were many letters of praise for KW, and mine was one of them. (We later learned that the infamous car wreck was caused by an angry husband chasing KW down a highway after catching him with his wife.)

When this predator could no longer preach and teach, he set up a counseling office. I had heard from several parishioners that they were seeing KW for counseling, including a friend of mine and her husband who sought marriage

*Busch-Armendariz, N.B., Olaya-Rodriguez, D., Kammer-Kerwick, M., Wachter, K. & Sulley C. (2015). *Health and well-being: Texas statewide sexual assault prevalence*. Austin, TX: Institute on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault, the University of Texas at Austin.

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counseling. So I scheduled an appointment to see him for counseling.

My first visit was in August 2000, and I told KW my concerns about the summer trip and the communication issues. I said I had been mildly depressed, and he was quick to note that he had noticed this in me for several months. I opened up about my childhood and told him I journaled, and he asked me to bring in my early writings. He also gave me his cell number and I was instructed to call him if I found anything important in those journals. I recall telling the family that night over dinner how therapeutic it was talking to an objective listener.

During the second visit, I told him that I had always prayed to keep mine and my husband's love alive, and that God had answered that prayer so many times. But I was tired and wished things would come more naturally. KW used this opportunity to steer the counseling away from marriage repair and into the zone of questioning whether I married the right person. He planted the idea that maybe things would not get better. Trusting him, I had the mindset that my counselor was trying to help me.

At the end of the second visit, I told him it would be another two weeks before I could return for a session, due to a busy work and family schedule. He took a step back, gasped, and said that is too long; we can't wait 2 weeks! I laughed and asked, "What is the big idea?" I saw he was serious, so I made another appointment for five days later.

On the third or fourth session, at the beginning of the visit, after fumbling with papers at his computer with his back to me, he dropped his keys and turned to me and said, "You know that I am attracted

to you. Do you know what you do to people?" I was shocked and said nothing. He then asked, "What do you think when I say something like that?" He seemed to understand the ethical implications, and I answered with a comment like it isn't right in a counselor-client setting like this. But when he said those words, the remainder of the visit was different. I could feel him looking at me. I was aware of a sexual tension between us. He did not apologize. He did not say we cannot meet anymore. I sought help for my marriage and my depression, and he was moving in, taking advantage of my vulnerability.

To the best of my recollection, it was the fourth visit that KW made his first physical move. He stood up at the end of the session, and he hugged me for the first time. He pulled my head back and kissed me on the lips. His hands crept up to my buttocks area. I said I was very afraid. Mockingly, he asked, "Really?" There was a fifth meeting in September; the last session I would pay for. At that session, I told him that we cannot continue with the counseling because of what he said about his attraction to me and crossing that line. But then that same evening, I gave him a note detailing my mutual sexual attraction towards him as a response to his earlier proclamation of attraction to me. I hesitantly spoke the words, "I am falling in love with you" outside my car in the church parking lot. He called me after reading the note and expressed great excitement over my having feelings for him, baiting me in terms of having a physical attraction to him.

He begged me to come back to his office, saying that I could certainly trust him. I returned to his office a few days later. It was hard not to return. He was my therapist, my spiritual leader, and now

my biggest fan. The attention alone was healing. Or so I thought. That was the first full physical contact. There was no mutual pleasure; my only goal was to please him. This was what he had been asking for all along. Immediately afterwards, I felt a rush of repulsion, then shame. Shame for my behavior, for giving in. But at the same time, what was that pull?

The abusive entanglement continued off and on for 20 months. There was a constant push-pull feeling throughout those months. I was more depressed and isolated due to the nature of the secret entanglement. I had not entered this "relationship" by choice, and I had no plan. I felt like I was his healing force. But mostly, I felt intense shame, knowing I was deceiving my husband and children, and deep down, knowing this would never be God's plan. I lost a piece of myself, internalizing much of the perpetrator's thoughts and ideas. I tried on several occasions to leave.

My first attempt at leaving was Christmas time, 2000; he would mock me when I tried to "break up." In the Fall of 2001, I went to see another counselor. I did not have the courage to tell her about KW. He was angry that I saw another counselor and perhaps concerned that I might disclose his exploitation. But I was torn between protecting the man that I pitied and cared for and protecting my own mental health and good name. I finally got out of the relationship in June 2002.

The confusion I felt throughout this abusive relationship was so intense that I attempted suicide in March 2002: I wrote a suicide note, telling my family how much I loved them, and swallowed 22 hydroxyzine pills. At that time, I felt more shame about the suicide attempt than the

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abusive relationship. Two other times I had considered suicide, the first time was two days after the initial sexual contact with KW.

When I finally told my husband, Felix, about the abuse, it was in pieces. I was still protective of my abuser and did not want KW to get into trouble. So, I told Felix that I had initiated the relationship. Eventually, the full story came out, and Felix confided in a psychologist. The psychologist pointed out that this was exploitation by a counselor, and it was a felony in Texas. The responsibility lies with the professional counselor to not cross this boundary. Now this was all good, but I still felt responsible. That is the result of a very skillful groomer. I knew he had initiated the idea of the sex, but I did go along with it. It took me a long time to let go of the guilt and the shame. I would later learn in my “repair counseling” that victims of sexual assault often overestimate their own degree of consent and underestimate the extent of coercion involved by the predator. I truly felt bad-to-the-core.

I also felt that, as a professional myself, I should have known what was going on, but after counseling with a trauma-informed counselor and reaching out to support groups and others who are familiar with sexual exploitation by professionals, I finally began to realize that the abuse was

not my fault. It is always the fault of the one in a position of power. End of story.

Although the perpetrator, the person in power, must take full blame for the abuse, my involvement harmed the trust relationship with my family. We both grieved the loss of trust in our marriage and I strived to be fully accountable for my betrayal to my family, even while healing from the shame of my abuse. Going through this has helped me understand why victims of adult abuse are so afraid to come forward.

When we realized that this predator was not going to stop counseling, I called the district attorney’s office in Spring of 2003 and spoke to an assistant district attorney. I told her my story of going to counseling and being sexually exploited, and that I had looked up the laws and realized it is a felony in the state of Texas. She said that I was not a child and odds were that my case would never make it to a grand jury. My husband and I knew that we had to get a criminal charge against KW to prevent him from harming others.

It became clear that KW had a pattern of abuse after speaking with members of his former church and two other victims. I discovered that an old friend had also been sexually exploited by KW (who was still in counseling). We then found a third victim, a young woman who attended bible study

with KW. She filed a police report.

KW was charged with two felony counts of sexual assault as well as one misdemeanor practicing as a mental health provider without a license. He was indicted on the felony charges and a trial date was set. Instead of going to trial, the case was settled on June 3, 2005 with a plea agreement of sexual assault by mental health or health care services provider. The terms of the plea agreement were five years community service under deferred adjudication, a \$2,500 fine, and one day in jail. For me, the most important thing that came out of this case is that KW must register as a sex offender every year for the rest of his life.

My own experience in “coming out” publicly in pursuit of justice, greatly impacted my family in a negative way. But overall, my experience with the legal system was positive. From the police investigator who took my report to the judge who sentenced my predator, I was given respect, and my story of abuse was validated. I feel that the justice system was the only way to show others that my story is true. The justice system gave me back my good name in a community that still may honor a once charismatic community leader who perhaps may still be charming friends and neighbors. The justice system, in this case, continues to protect the public from this abuser.

A sexual assault is without the consent if of the other person if:

the actor is a mental health services provider or a health care services provider who causes the other person, who is a patient or former patient of the actor, to submit or participate by exploiting the other person’s emotional dependency on the actor; or

the actor is a clergyman who causes the other person to submit or participate by exploiting the other person’s emotional dependency on the clergyman in the clergyman’s professional character as spiritual adviser.

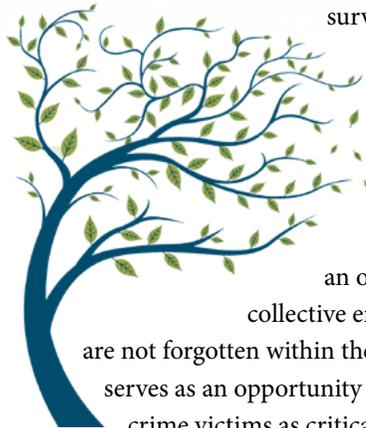
- Texas Penal Code, Section 22.011(b)(9-10)

NATIONAL VICTIM AWARENESS DATES

APRIL 2020

National Crime Victims' Rights Week

National Crime Victims' Rights Week, proclaimed in 1981 by President Ronald Reagan, is a weeklong observance every April in which our nation joins together to honor crime victims and survivors, and those who advocate on their behalf. National Crime Victims' Rights Week is a time to acknowledge the devastating impact of crime on victims and communities in the United States; it is an opportunity to devote our collective energies to ensure that victims are not forgotten within the justice system; and it also serves as an opportunity to recognize those who serve crime victims as critical partners in our collective efforts to promote safety and justice for all. National Crime Victims' Rights Week for 2020 will be commemorated April 19-25. This year's theme, "Seek Justice | Ensure Victims' Rights | Inspire Hope," celebrates the progress made by those before us as we look to a future of crime victim services that is even more inclusive, accessible, and trauma-informed.



End Violence Against Women International Conference (EVAWI)

EVAWI's annual conferences focus on sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, human trafficking and elder abuse. They consistently bring together law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, victim advocates, judges, parole and probation officers, rape crisis workers, health care professionals, and community members, educators, researchers, and others. This three-day conference highlights promising practices and emerging issues to effectively respond to these crimes in all of our communities. With over 60 hours of training, April 14 – 16, 2020 in Washington, DC, offering six general sessions, a choice of 60 workshops and over 100 presenters, you are certain to learn something you can bring home and apply on the job. Moreover, with over 2,100 professionals expected to attend, you can anticipate countless opportunities to meet, rejuvenate and share ideas with other colleagues.

The 2020 Preconference, on Monday, April 13th, will provide attendees an opportunity to participate in a full day course the day before the main conference begins. Event website: <https://www.evawintl.org/>

MAY 2020

National Correctional Officers and Employees Week

In 1984, President Ronald Reagan issued Proclamation 5187-National Correctional Officers' Week, in which he called "upon officials of State and local governments and the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities," to recognize "the contributions of correctional officers to our Nation."

National Correctional Officers and Employees Week, May 2 – 8, 2020 honors the thousands of women and men working in corrections in adult and juvenile federal, state, local, and private facilities. Corrections professionals put their health, safety, and lives on the line every day to maintain public safety, to reform, and rehabilitate our nation's offenders. As President Reagan recognized in 1984, correctional officers do more than guard offenders. They treat, counsel, train, teach and rebuild lives.

Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week

Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week is an observance in the United States that pays tribute to the local, state, and federal peace officers who have died, or who have been disabled, in the line of duty. The formal memorial is on May 15, and Police Week is the calendar week in which the memorial falls. This year Police week is May 10 – 16, 2020. The event is sponsored by the National Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and is implemented by the FOP Memorial Committee. Other events of National Police Week include an annual Blue Mass, Candlelight Vigil, Wreath Laying Ceremony, and the National Concerns of Police Survivors Conference.

The Texas Peace Officers' Memorial Ceremony will be held on Monday May 4th, 2020 at the State Capitol. The Memorial Ceremony Processional March to the Capitol begins on the Congress Avenue Bridge at 10:30 am.

Ride for the Fallen May 2nd, Cowboy Harley-Davidson. On-site registration 8:00 – 10:30 am. Pre-registration is live at mbr.cleat.org/rideforthefallen.

Texas Peace Officers Memorial Ride. May 1st-3rd. Registration: <https://www.tpomr.org/rider-registration>.

Candlelight Vigil. May 3rd. 7:50 pm. Texas Peace Officers Memorial on the northeast side of the State Capitol. Law enforcement registration and sign up.

Memorial Ceremony: May 4th. Begins with the arrival of a processional march that begins on the Congress Avenue Bridge at 10:30 am.

"Getting out from under a history of abuse takes courage and a good amount of desperation. Secrets can kill you, literally. But victims of domestic violence often suffer silently. They may be unable to leave, trapped through isolation and insecurity, lack of funds, or the desire to protect children from a potentially worse situation. The biggest reason, however, is fear and shame."

from "The Secret Shame of Domestic Violence," Deborah King, *Psychology Today*, October 23, 2014

Shame

by Mandy Rowden

I bow I bow I bow

I bow like a tree in the wind

For now, for now, for now

Until I can stand again

I say I say I say

I will rise, I will rise again

But I stay I stay I stay

Because I'm weak and I don't think I can

I bow my head, but it won't go away

Shame is the price that I pay.

I feel I feel I feel

The weight of the chains on my neck

But I will I will I will

Find the beauty beneath this train wreck

I call I call I call

On the powers for a moment's rest

But I fall I fall I fall

And I long for mercy's caress

I bow my head, but it won't go away

Shame is the price that I pay.

Shame is the price that I pay.

"I wrote the song about the ways I felt I was letting people down around me, as well as regrets about bad choices I'd made, which at the time seemed like more than I could handle. On the one hand I felt beaten down by the shame of my position but still found something inside me that refused to give up, refused to let my circumstances define me. It's a very empowering song to perform and I sincerely hope it speaks to someone who needs to pick it up and try again as well."

- Mandy (Lyrics reprinted with Mandy's permission.)

INFORMATION ABOUT THE VICTIM'S INFORMER

The Victim's Informer e-newsletter is published quarterly. Articles and other submissions should be sent to the TDCJ Victim Services Division, Texas Crime Victim Clearinghouse, 8712 Shoal Creek Blvd, Suite 265, Austin, Texas 78757-6899 or emailed to tdcj.clearinghouse@tdcj.texas.gov. If you would like to submit materials, the deadline dates for articles, meeting notices, and other submissions are below. For questions or comments, please call us at 800-848-4284 or 512-406-5931.

Deadlines for articles and other information:

April 3, 2020 for June/July issue

July 3, 2020 for September/October issue

Please Note: You may access the publication at the TDCJ VSD website by going to tdcj.texas.gov/publications/victim_informer_newsletter.html. If you wish, we will notify you via email or text each time The Victim's Informer becomes available on the TDCJ VSD website and provide an electronic link to The Victim's Informer.

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Angie McCown, Director

Texas Department of Criminal Justice

Victim Services Division

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