

ARTICLE 3

"Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

- Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948



Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights

Newsletter 5 • Fall 2007/Winter 2008

Former Warden and Victims' Family Member Now Opposes the Death Penalty

When Ron McAndrew was about to be made warden of Florida State Prison, the Secretary of the Department of Correction asked him if he was going to have any problem with the executions. He replied, "No, sir." That was the extent of the conversation, but Ron McAndrew *didn't* anticipate having any kind of problem. He believed in the death penalty, and being a relative of two murder victims only reinforced that belief. "My support of the death penalty was firm," he recalls. "I thought it was the right thing to do."

A warden is in charge of every detail of an execution, from selecting the execution team to spending time with the condemned inmate and his family. Ron McAndrew served as the prison warden from 1992 to 2001, and it wasn't until his final year on the job that he began having serious doubts about the death penalty. But when he looks back, he realizes that even the first execution had been disturbing to him. He vividly recalls looking at the face of the victim's sister, who had chosen to witness the execution. "It was pretty horrifying, really, to see

somebody enjoy somebody else's death. I could understand her wanting to be there, but seeing her enjoy it – it told me there was a sick side to this business."

Ron did understand how angry a family member of a murder victim feels. His cousin, who had lived with his family when he was growing up, was killed by a group of men who held her against the wall of a church and then drove a car straight at her, shattering her body. The men responsible for her death were never caught. Many years later, Ron's sister-in-law was killed by a drunk driver who received a second-degree life sentence and committed suicide in prison after serving ten years.

"It struck me that not a single person in my family expressed pleasure at his suicide," Ron recalls. "Every time he had come up for parole, we had all written letters opposing his release. We had all worked together for that, but his death didn't do anything for us; we didn't celebrate it."

That was one of the things that came to mind when Ron started questioning the death penalty. It

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Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights

Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights is an international, non-governmental organization of family members of victims of criminal murder, terrorist killings, state executions, extrajudicial assassinations, and "disappearances" working to oppose the death penalty from a human rights perspective.

Membership is open to all victims' family members who oppose the death penalty in all cases. "Friend of MVFHR" membership is open to all those interested in joining our efforts.

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Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights is a member of the World Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, the U.S. Human Rights Network, Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network and the National Organization for Victim Assistance

Article 3

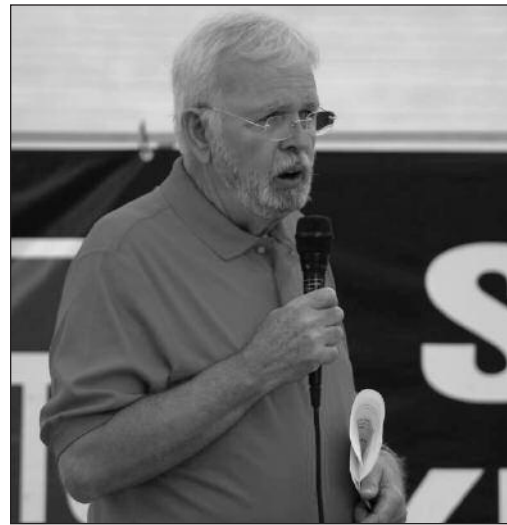
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Jack Payden-Travers/VADP

Ron McAndrew speaks at the Starvin' for Justice Fast and Vigil in Washington, DC

was also his new commitment to the Catholic faith, and a general re-evaluation of what he was doing in his life and what kind of person he wanted to be.

"During this period, I told my priest how troubled I was by the executions," he remembers. "I said, it's like the executed men come to sit on the edge of my bed; I find them in

my mind all the time. I'm feeling like I want to say I'm sorry I had any part in it."

Ron can list all kinds of reasons for opposing the death penalty today, but at the core of it is the word on an executed inmate's death certificate. "Do you know what it says is the cause of death?" he asks. "Homicide. We're killing people. That's what executions are. I don't think we have the right to do that morally or legally."

Asked how he felt about the job he was about to take on, Ron McAndrew had answered that he had no problem with executions. Now, as a former warden, as a family member of murder victims, as a Catholic, and as a citizen, Ron McAndrew *does* have a problem – so much so that he traveled to Washington, DC earlier this year to speak out on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court as part of the annual Starvin' for Justice Fast and Vigil. He continues to speak to anyone who will listen: "As firmly as I once believed executions are the right thing to do, that's how firmly I now believe that speaking out against executions is the right thing to do."

New MVFHR Group in Japan, and Speaking Tour in Taiwan

In June, family members of murder victims came together with other anti-death penalty allies to announce the formation of a Japanese MVFHR group. Called "Ocean" as a symbol of new life and new hope, the group is MVFHR's first official affiliate outside the United States. Board member Toshi Kazama and Executive Director Renny Cushing traveled to Japan to participate in a press conference announcing the new group and to deliver several public presentations about victims and the death penalty.

Ocean's founder, Masaharu Harada, originally supported the death penalty after his brother was murdered in 1983. But by the time the convicted murderer was executed in 2001, Mr. Harada had come to feel that the death penalty was too simplistic a solution to violent crime. "Executing my brother's murderer did nothing to put my mind at ease," he wrote in a newspaper opinion piece.

Until Mr. Harada met Renny Cushing in 2004, he had never spoken with another family member of a murder victim who shared his opposition to the death penalty. The stigma associated with being the relative of a murder victim in Japan means that survivors feel isolated and ashamed and are reluctant to come forward at all, let alone to speak against the death penalty.

Gradually, with support from MVFHR, Mr. Harada was able to find others who shared his beliefs and were willing to join him in starting an official group. After reading the press coverage about Ocean, more victims' family members have begun calling to express interest in participating.

Mr. Harada says that other people tend to imagine they know what victims feel and want, and his goal is to create an organization through which victims can speak for themselves. He also hopes to bridge the gap between offenders and victims by providing opportunities for both sides, including their families, to talk. The group will discuss, and eventually advocate for, alternatives to the death penalty in Japan.

While in Asia, Renny and Toshi also participated in a speaking tour called "Victims, We Care," organized by the Taiwan Alliance to End the Death Penalty and other human rights organizations. Some of the country's chief prosecutors, and Taiwanese murder victims' family members, also spoke during



Amnesty International Japan

Announcing the launch of the Japanese MVFHR group, Ocean: from left to right, Toshi Kazama, Renny Cushing, Masaharu Harada, attorney Maiko Tagusari, and professor Kaori Sakagami

the presentations. Although popular support for the death penalty remains high in Taiwan, executions have been declining, and none has taken place since 2005.

As part of the speaking tour, Toshi exhibited, for the first time, the photographs he has taken of Taiwan's death row and execution chamber, which the Taiwanese public had never seen. As well, Toshi and Renny met with Taiwanese victims' advocates, and participated in a national strategy session with Taiwanese anti-death penalty activists, helping them think about how to integrate victims' voices and concerns into the anti-death penalty campaign.

The "Victims, We Care" tour and MVFHR's visit received some good press coverage, including a program on Radio Taiwan International, which was broadcast to the Chinese community all over the world, including mainland China, bringing our mes-

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sage for the first time to the country that carries out more executions than any other.

Perhaps the most powerful part of MVFHR's visit to Taiwan was a meeting with a dozen people whose family members had been killed during the "White Terror," a 37-year period of Martial Law during which thousands were executed for perceived opposition to the Chiang Kai-shek government. "Many of these survivors still have no idea exactly what happened to their family members," Renny explains. "Hearing them, and being there while they listened to each other, was indescribably powerful. It reminded me of the gathering we held in Texas two years ago with family members of the executed in the U.S., and it also opened my eyes to a whole experience of suffering that I hadn't known much about."



MVFHR continues to work with these groups in Japan and Taiwan and with the Asian Death Penalty Abolition Network. Toshi, who will serve on Ocean's board of directors, explains why he believes it is important for a U.S.-based group like MVFHR to work to abolish the death penalty in Asian countries: "The societies there are so concealed, so closed. When we come over from the U.S. and speak to people in Asian countries about the death penalty, it's like we're bringing the key to the secret door. They feel like, OK, I can talk about it too now. Our support and involvement make a huge difference. And, for our part, we need to show that we care about abolishing the death penalty everywhere, not just in our own backyard."

Families of the Executed Come Together at Women's Peace Conference

Women who had lost a family member to state execution in different countries came together when MVFHR presented a panel at the Third International Women's Peace Conference, which was held in Texas this July. Texas members Lois Robison and Melanie Hebert were joined on the panel by Tamara Chikunova, director of the Uzbekistan-based group Mothers Against the Death Penalty and Torture and one of MVFHR's founding members. Tamara also spoke at a reception hosted by the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (TCADP) and was able to meet with local activists there.

During this trip, which was Tamara's first visit to the U.S., TCADP member Susybelle Gosslee arranged a meeting with members of the *Dallas Morning News* editorial board. Tamara, Betty Gahima from Rwanda, Rick Halperin from Amnesty International and TCADP, and Susannah Sheffer from MVFHR's staff offered several specific suggestions about aspects of the death penalty that this major newspaper might investigate, including victim opposition to the death penalty. Our international visitors were also able to deliver the tremendous news that both Uzbekistan and Rwanda had just recently voted to abolish the death penalty.

Lois Robison, whose son Larry was executed in Texas in 2000, wrote about the experience of participating in the peace conference and meeting a mother of an executed son from another country: "We had so much in common: mothers fighting an unreasonable system for the life of our sons, working with other families who were caught in that system, traveling around the world to tell our sons' stories, and never giving up regardless of the opposition we faced.

"There were also great differences in our fight. One of my worst fears was how I would be able to go into my classroom and teach my third graders after the prison system had announced the exact day

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and hour of Larry's execution, listening to the clock ticking and being helpless to do anything to stop it. When Tamara told us how she was not told when her son was to be executed, learning of his execution only after he died, and not even being able to know where he was buried, I knew that there was something much more agonizing than knowing the time and date before it happened.

"I greatly admire Tamara's courage to continue her fight despite the fact that she put herself in danger by doing so. That made me realize that I never faced any danger by speaking out. As bad as the State of Texas is about the death penalty, I learned that there are places on this earth that are worse. I came away from the conference believing more strongly than ever that when women speak out about injustice, they can make a difference."

Melanie Hebert, whose uncle Spencer Goodman was executed in Texas the same week as Larry Robison, wrote: "Meeting Tamara Chikunova was a profound experience for me. In many ways, our experiences were vastly different. Being from Uzbekistan, Tamara and her son were denied many of the basic legal and moral rights that are usually afforded to even the condemned and their families here in the United States. Both Tamara and her son were physically tortured, which is something that we thankfully cannot fully relate to in our country as it is not routine here. The most notable difference was the fact that Tamara and her son were never given the opportunity to have a final meeting in which to say good-bye to each other.

"But as distinct as our experiences were, there

were certain similarities that seem to be universal in these sorts of tragedies. I related to Tamara's feeling of anxious helplessness as she struggled to deal with the trauma and finality of the ordeal she was facing.

Furthermore, we shared our experiences of the intense torment, devastation, and depression we felt following the executions of our loved ones. We both chose

to use those emotions as a catalyst for combating what we believe is a universal injustice that will eventually be seen as such by every nation."



Susannah Sheffer (moderator), Lois Robison, Melanie Hebert, Tamara Chikunova

Victim Opposition to the Death Penalty Making a Difference

Survivors of murder victims are commonly assumed to favor the death penalty, but when survivors who feel differently make their views known, people do listen. We asked several of our members to describe a time when they felt they were truly reaching their listeners and when the message of victim opposition to the death penalty had made a real difference. If you have a story like this, write and tell us about it!

In 2003, I was testifying before Massachusetts legislators as part of a victims'-family-members-against-the-death-penalty panel. It was my third time testifying against reinstatement of the death penalty in Massachusetts. We were each given two minutes to say our piece, and I said, "I hear a lot of talk from pro-death penalty representatives that we need the death penalty to support victims, that people who don't support the death penalty don't care about victims. Well, my father was the victim of a homicide, and I want to challenge each of the representatives on this panel to do something for him: take one hour and research the effect the death penalty has on the states that practice it – the injustice of wrongful convictions, the clogged appellate courts, the higher murder rates – and if, after your hour of research, you can honestly say that the death penalty is going to be good for this state, is going to prevent murders or keep us safe, then come back and vote for it. But if you want to support victims of homicide, take one hour, do your research, and then vote."

After my testimony, I heard from a colleague that one previously pro-death penalty rep had switched her vote and had mentioned that my testimony had been an important part of her change. – *Tom Lowenstein (MA)*

While speaking to a group of about 250 people at a United Church of Christ in Connecticut, I answered many questions and felt that I had reached most in the room. However, after the program, one man came up and spoke to me in private, saying that he was a medical doctor who had a great deal of respect for life, but he was still having trouble with the issue of the death penalty. "If you take someone else's life, you deserve to pay with your own life," he said. After all, he felt that innocent victims' family members deserve that justice. I asked him, "What about other innocent people who pay a huge penalty when the death penalty is carried out?" He asked, "What do you mean?" and I proceeded to tell him the story of a woman I know whose father was executed. When I finished telling the story, the medical doctor said to me, "Wow, I never thought of it like that. I'm going to have to go home and do some serious thinking about what I have believed." – *Walt Everett (PA)*

When Illinois State Representative Jeff Schoenberg was voting in committee to let an abolition bill out to the full House several years ago, the committee vote was

split evenly for and against and he was the "swing" middle vote. He had said all along he was likely going to vote against the bill. But my sister Jeanne and I had both spoken at an event in a church that he and his wife had heard. He took a call from Jeanne the night before the vote where he talked in depth with her as a family member of a victim of the most prominent murder in his district. He said the next day in open committee that Jeanne and I had changed his mind. He has since spoken publicly against the death penalty many times and always credits us with his transformation on this issue. – *Jennifer Bishop-Jenkins (IL)*

Seven people from our group, Friends and Families of Homicide Victims, which is a part of New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty, spoke at a church in Albany not long ago. The next day I got an email from a woman who had been in attendance. She said that she had come expecting to hear from both sides – people who supported the death penalty and people who opposed it – so in that sense she did not get what she came for. But, she went on to say, she came away with even more than she had expected: a deepening of her own understanding. "You are making a difference," she wrote. – *Marie Verzulli (NY)*

I was talking with another mother in our group Mothers Against Gun Violence. Her son had been killed just like mine had been. Initially she

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was for the death penalty. I talked to her about how the death penalty is not equally applied and how innocent people get sentenced, and she listened to me and thought about it and decided that she was willing to say publicly that she was against the death penalty. Another time, I spoke at a church, and several people came up to me afterwards and said that they had been for the death penalty but listening to me had changed their minds. "If your only son was shot to death and you can oppose the death penalty, then who am I to be for it?" one person said to me.

– *Debra Fifer (WI)*

When I lived in California, I testified at a hearing about a bill that would have extended the death penalty there. The prison officers union had representatives who testified in favor of the bill, as did a mother whose son had been murdered. I was joined by the ACLU and other groups. We were each allowed five minutes to testify. I recall there were about eight Senators. I asked that each Senator be given a copy of *Not In Our Name: Families of Murder Victims Speak Out Against the Death Penalty*. The bill was voted down by a margin of one vote. I was thrilled when an administrative assistant came up to me. She said that she wanted me to know that her boss had voted against the bill because of my testimony.

Another time, Renny Cushing and I spoke at a small Catholic church in San Angelo, Texas. The turnout was small and at first we were disappointed. Just as he began, one more person came in. He was

the Bishop of San Angelo Diocese. He had attended an execution of a young man from San Angelo the night before. When we were finished he stood and talked about his and the church's opposition to the death penalty. He said that it was stories like Renny's and mine that would ultimately change people's minds and end the death penalty. As people were leaving, a woman came up to me and said, "I came here tonight believing in the death penalty and after hearing you I am against it." – *Aba Gayle (OR)*

When 18-year old Joseph "Shadow" Clark murdered my son John and his wife Nancy as they slept in their newly purchased home in Montana on August 12, 1993, my many grandchildren were very young. My five living children and I kept them protected from knowing the details or the depth of our pain. I had worked most of my life against the death penalty, and had to struggle now with what I was going to believe now that my life would never be free of pain and sadness. I had also raised my children to see the wrongness of killing, including the execution of convicted murderers, when we could protect society by confining them in prisons where maybe they could eventually repent of their crimes and still do some good with their lives.

We were tested by the torment of having to survive murder first hand, but it did not change our belief in the value of life. And so, we wrote to the judge asking that young Clark be spared the death penalty. He never went to trial, took a plea bargain and will be in prison until he is 60.

Then, much to our surprise, two years ago I received a letter from Joseph Clark, expressing his deep sorrow for the pain he had caused me and my family. I responded that we accepted his remorse and wanted him to continue in his rehabilitation work, some of which, he had written, was to help in the education of some of the younger prisoners. In July 2007, his latest letter began, "After much prayer and thought, I am ready to take the next step in the healing and reformation process..." I can't help thinking that our opposition to the death penalty for him had something to do with this.

What has given me much peace is that now my many grandchildren, some becoming college students, have taken up the cause of wanting to end the death penalty. When my granddaughter Talia Bosco wrote an essay for a ninth grade high school assignment that was on her opposition to the death penalty, I had the joy of knowing my beliefs will continue to be passed on. In her words: "The death penalty is a useless, unproductive punishment that just throws away one life after another...We have to look deep inside ourselves and choose mercy, because a rotten killer's life is still a life nonetheless and life needs to be cherished, not destroyed."

– *Antoinette Bosco (CT)*

How Anti-Death Penalty Activists Can Support Victims

What can abolition groups do to support victims and make sure their work is pro-victim as well as anti-death penalty? This is an ongoing conversation within the anti-death penalty movement, and, of course, a question that is central to the work of MVFHR. We want to offer a couple of ideas, reflections, and suggestions here, and we anticipate this being the first in a series of such articles.

Stacy Rector, Executive Director of the Tennessee Coalition to Abolish State Killing (TCASK), told us that TCASK attends an annual event called A Season to Remember. “The governor’s wife, who is herself a victim of violent crime, holds this special event remembering victims of crime and inviting their families to hang ornaments on a wreath in their loved ones’ honor,” Stacy explains. “TCASK attends and supports those of our activists who are also victims’ family members.” TCASK has no official involvement in the event – the point is their presence – but “people in the community who know us know we are there.”

When members of an anti-death penalty group attend an event like this, their participation says they recognize that the tragedy of the death penalty does not begin with the inmate facing execution, but rather with the victim of the original murder. It roots anti-death penalty work in a broader commitment to reducing murder in the first place, recogniz-

ing how violent loss affects surviving family members, and thinking about how society should respond to that loss if *not* with the death penalty. It’s a challenge for each group to consider how to express or demonstrate this in a way that is meaningful and recognizable in their particular community.

Marie Verzulli, the Victim Outreach Coordinator of New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty (NYADP) and the sister of a murder victim, told us that she has participated in a multi-faith vigil for victims of homicide and a memorial service sponsored by the state attorney general at the beginning of Crime Victims Rights Week. Marie also works regularly with one of the biggest victim service providers in the state, with the head of the state Crime Victims Board, with the local Parents of Murdered Children chapter, and with a crime victims’ advocacy and violence prevention organization that was started by the mother of a murder victim.

“These are groups that do not take a stand for or against the death penalty, and whose members may in fact support it, but we can work with them because of our common concern for victims,” Marie explains. “It builds trust between us – they see that we really mean it when we say we care about victims and victims’ issues.”

Laura Porter, deputy Executive Director of NYADP, reflects on the value of building these bridges

with victims’ groups: “When that trust is there, that sense of working together, there is a greater chance that we can agree that other resources for victims, or efforts to reduce violence, are more important than having the death penalty available. When we are talking about whether to reinstate the death penalty here in New York, even someone who personally supports the death penalty might feel comfortable saying publicly that the death penalty is not the top priority for victims – other things are more urgently needed.”

Laura continues, “I believe that long-term, this kind of collaboration and bridge-building is what will work to abolish the death penalty. If we really want to reach people who are traditionally supporters of the death penalty – including members of law enforcement – we have to find ways to develop genuine connections and to mean it when we say we care about public safety and the needs of victims. And we can’t just ask a victim to take a public position against the death penalty, or even to refrain from taking a public position in support of the death penalty, if we have not shown that we are supporters of victims’ issues and concerns as well.”

Why the Abolition Movement Needs Independent Victims' Groups

Talking about pro-victim anti-death penalty work, as our colleagues did in the previous story, also invites us to consider the value of independent victims' organizations that participate in anti-death penalty work with that identity and from that perspective. Here are some reasons we believe in the necessity of having such groups both locally and nationally:

The kind of bridge-building described in the previous story is achieved more effectively by groups who have a bona fide victim identity and an understanding of the victim experience from the inside

When individual victims are speaking out against the death penalty, their voices are strengthened when they can say that they represent a whole group of victims with this specific experience and agenda. Presented this way, abolition of the death penalty is more directly and obviously shown to be a concern of victims. Rather than it appearing as though victims have been brought in to help serve the interests of the anti-death penalty movement, the message is that, as victims, abolishing the death penalty *is* in our interests, and those who want to be responsive to the needs of victims should take note

Victims' groups can carry the message into the victims' rights movement and victims' assistance

community that not all victims support the death penalty. When we speak at national victim assistance or victims' studies conferences, for example, we are educating people *whose primary mission is to serve victims* about the fact that victims have a range of beliefs and needs regarding the death penalty. Knowing this means that such groups cannot take an exclusively pro-death penalty position, or advocate for the death penalty in the name of victims, without ignoring a portion of those whom they are serving

Victims' advocates – the front-line service providers who assist survivors in the aftermath of a murder – are more likely to call a victims' group than a general anti-death penalty group for help with a family who is wrestling with the question of the death penalty. Marie Verzulli describes how her group, Families and Friends of Homicide Victims, which is supported by NYADP but has an independent identity as well, serves as “a place where people who are on the fence about the death penalty can actually explore that safely, with other victims, in a way that they couldn't or wouldn't do in the context of an abolition group. I really believe this will help abolition in the long run, because if someone who is ambivalent about the death penalty from a victim perspective never has the chance to explore that and talk about it

with people who understand the ambivalence, how can they move to another position?”

A group whose members are victims and whose focus is on victim-oriented opposition to the death penalty is in the best position to craft public messages that are sensitive and respectful to victims, and to be aware – again, from the inside – of the subtleties involved in doing this successfully

As with any issue and any strategic effort, both local and national groups are necessary. A local group can form and maintain relationships with colleagues in that local area, reach out to and hold gatherings of victims in a particular region, monitor local victims' issues and local death penalty issues, and generally do the sort of work and relationship-building that is best done by a group that is rooted in a specific geographic area. A national group can serve as a clearinghouse for information and referrals, offer training and educational materials that can be used or adapted locally, build relationships with national victims' organizations, monitor and contribute to discussions about national legislation and policymaking, and generally do the sort of work and relationship-building that is best done by a group that has a national focus and perspective.

– Renny Cushing

Families of “Brown’s Chicken Massacre” Victims Speak About the Death Penalty



Mary Jane Crow speaks at the Chicago press conference.

In May, MVFHR co-sponsored a Chicago press conference organized by DePaul University Students Against the Death Penalty. The event was held during the trial of one of the men facing the death penalty for killing seven people in a crime that had become nationally known as the “Brown’s Chicken Massacre.” Mary Jane Crow, whose 16-year-old brother was one of the victims,

expressed her opposition to the death penalty by saying, “A kill for a kill, blood for blood, is not the right answer.” Also at the press conference, Illinois MVFHR member Cathy Crino described the work of MVFHR and explained that there are victims throughout the United States who oppose the death penalty.

The 1993 murder of Lynn and Richard Ehlenfeldt, owners of Brown’s Chicken and Pasta restaurant in Palatine, Illinois, and their five employees Michael Castro, Marcus Nellsen, Guadalupe Maldonado, Thomas Mennes, and Rico Solis, had not been solved until 2002, when two men were arrested and charged with the murders. Since then, some of the victims’ family members have said publicly that they oppose the death penalty. Last year, for example, Wisconsin state representative Jennifer Shilling, the oldest daughter of the Ehlenfeldts, spoke during the floor debate about a bill that would have reinstated the death penalty in Wisconsin, saying, “For some survivors of homicide, the thought of executing someone adds to the pain.”

A jury convicted Juan Luna of the seven murders and sentenced him to life in prison without the possibility of parole. In a recent interview with *Article 3*, Joy Ehlenfeldt, Lynn and Richard’s youngest daughter, talked about the emotional complexity of being opposed to the death penalty but then going through a capital trial in which she had such an enormous personal stake.

“Ultimately I am still against the death penalty,” she said, “but I struggle with the feeling that Juan Luna should have received the most severe sentence available. I found myself thinking, if brutally killing seven people doesn’t warrant the death penalty, then what does?”

“My conflicting feelings make me think that the availability of the death penalty as a legal option in a case may add to the internal struggles, anxiety, and confusion that the victims’ families are already experiencing,” Joy continued, “because when you know that the jury has a choice between two sentences and they choose life without parole, it can feel like they have chosen the lesser sentence, and that feels like he is getting a reprieve from having to accept responsibility and pay the consequences of his intentional and brutal actions. During the trial, without any warning, I had to see a photo of my mother’s face in the morgue. So many emotions come up for victims during a trial, and sometimes that can mean that we feel like we want the murderer to be sentenced to death, but having a legal way for those feelings to be acted on is something else.”

The intense emotion during the trial process also led Joy to choose not to speak out as often as she had before. “Obviously my beliefs about the death penalty aren’t a secret,” she explained, “but there are so many feelings associated with all this that are so visceral and private. When I do public speaking, I want to be very deliberate and clear in what I say, and in the heat of the moment, I did not want to say something that I didn’t mean. My sisters and I agreed: we didn’t want to misrepresent ourselves or our parents unintentionally.”

Supporting the other victims’ family members was also of paramount importance for Joy: “We all knew that among us there were different beliefs about the death penalty, and we all respected that. We didn’t debate it; we didn’t want to bring that kind of discord to our group. To me, at that time, the most important thing was to support all the victims’ families no matter what their opinion on the death penalty.”

MVFHR Needs an Additional \$5,000!



Bud Welch speaking at the Third World Congress Against the Death Penalty.

When I read the stories in this newsletter, I feel proud, and I feel relieved. In the years that I've been speaking out against the death penalty, I can't tell you how many times I've been glad to know I'm part of an organization whose members have been through something like what I've been through and who feel the way I do about the death penalty. I know it's not just me talking – it's all of us, together.

And other people really are listening. The examples in this newsletter of MVFHR members reaching people with our message of victim opposition to the death penalty tell me that. Whether we're talking to newspaper editors, lawmakers, church groups, or student audiences, our message never loses its power.

As the father of a murder victim, I'm glad MVFHR exists. And as president of MVFHR, I'm awed by how much hard work the stories in this newsletter represent. It's so essential that we all be able to keep doing this work and keep spreading our message to people who are in a position to act on it. We want to continue to work with our members to present workshops, write articles, speak to the press, develop educational materials, and reach out to people who support the death penalty but might be open to hearing from our members about another view.

To do all this, we urgently need your support to raise an additional \$5,000 this fall. We're a small organization with big hopes and big goals, and without financial help we won't be able to do all the work we need to do. Please help by completing the form below or the enclosed return envelope and sending us your check today.

In gratitude and solidarity,

Bud Welch

President and Chair

YES, I want to support the work of Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights. Enclosed is a check with my tax-deductible contribution of

\$250 \$100 \$50 \$25 Other amount \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

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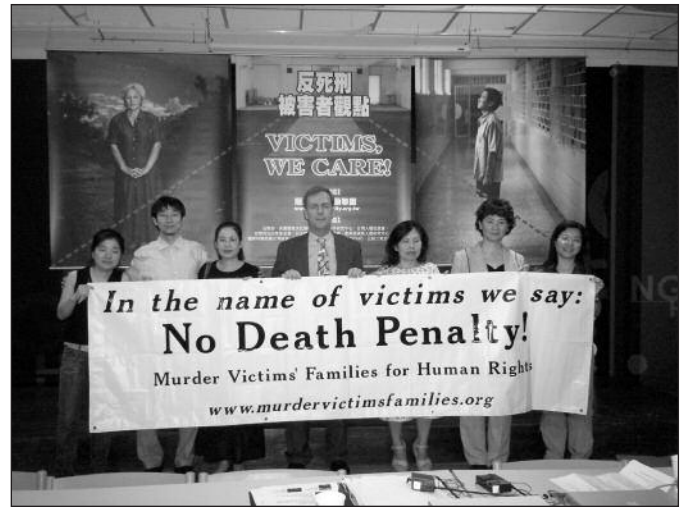
Phone: _____ Email: _____

To donate with a credit card, please visit our website, www.murdervictimsfamilies.org

Vicki Schieber, Treasurer
MVFHR – DC Office
2611 Washington Avenue • Chevy Chase MD 20815

Announcing MVFHR's new blog, "For Victims, Against the Death Penalty!"

We're excited to tell you that in early September, MVFHR launched a new forum for keeping in touch and spreading our message. Now, in addition to publishing our newsletter, *Article 3*, twice a year, we'll be able to offer news and thoughts about the death penalty and victims' issues several times a month. Come visit www.mvfhr.blogspot.com, where you'll find updates about our organization's work, reflections from Executive Director Renny Cushing, and stories and reports from families of murder victims and families of the executed throughout the United States and around the world.



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