Homicide Victims Remembrance Display at Courthouse to Commemorate National Crime Victims’ Rights Week

National Crime Victims’ Rights Week is the week of April 13 to 19, 2008. To commemorate the occasion and to honor the memory of victims in Yavapai County who have died at the hands of others, the Yavapai County Attorneys’ Office will unveil the Homicide Victim Remembrance Display at 8:15 a.m. on Monday, April 14, 2008, at the gazebo at the courthouse plaza in downtown Prescott. The public is invited to join in the unveiling.

The display includes ten life-sized silhouettes representing actual homicide victims in Yavapai County. Each figure is made by prison inmates and has a breastplate shield giving the victim’s name, dates of birth and death, and a short summation of their victimization. Surviving family members have displayed pictures, poems or other written material in the remaining torso area of the silhouettes to honor their loved one’s memory. The County Attorney Victim Services Division worked with the Arizona Department of Corrections to create the display.

The victims of homicide represented in the display are: - Cassandra & Alexus Lang, Michael Doherty, Edward Green, Patricia Kreis, Shane Gilmore, Misty Brown, Tammy Kimbrell, Charles Thurman, Katelyn Rinde and Margaret Romo. These victims represent a spectrum of the tragedy and loss experienced by many other victims and surviving family members throughout Yavapai County.

The goal of the display is threefold: REMEMBRANCE - honoring the memory of those who have died at the hands of another; AWARENESS - raising awareness of the extent of violence and homicide within our community; and ADVOCACY - ensuring that victims have a voice even after their death. According to Yavapai County Attorney Sheila Polk, “The display is very emotional and reminds all of us what our criminal justice system is about. It was the idea of victim advocate Marie Martinez and she has done a wonderful job coordinating the silhouettes and bringing in the surviving families to participate.”

The Yavapai County Board of Supervisors has also proclaimed the week of April 13 to 19, 2008, as National Crime Victims’ Rights Week. The Proclamation reaffirms the County’s commitment to respect and enforce victims’ rights and expresses appreciation for those victims and crime survivors who have turned personal tragedy into building a more just community. A copy of the Proclamation is attached.

Sheila Polk added: “‘Crime victims’ rights are a critical component of ‘justice for all,’ the foundation for our criminal justice system in America. I hope everyone in the community will take the time to visit the display at the gazebo.”
PROCLAMATION

National Crime Victims’ Rights Week April 13 – 19, 2008

Whereas, 23 million Americans are victims of crime each year, and of those, 5.2 million are victims of violent crime; and

Whereas, a just society acknowledges crime’s impact on individuals, families, and communities by ensuring that rights, resources, and services are available to help rebuild lives; and

Whereas, victims’ rights are a critical component of the promise of “justice for all,” the foundation for our system of justice in America; and

Whereas, although our nation has steadily expanded rights, protections, and services for victims of crime, too many victims are still not able to realize the hope and promise of these gains; and

Whereas, we must do better to ensure services are available for underserved segments of our population, including crime victims with disabilities, victims with mental illness, victims who are teenagers, victims who are elderly, victims in rural areas, and victims in communities of color; and

Whereas, observing victims’ rights and treating victims with dignity and respect serves the public interest by engaging victims in the justice system, inspiring respect for public authorities, and promoting confidence in public safety; and

Whereas, America recognizes that we make our homes, neighborhoods, and communities safer and stronger by serving victims of crime and ensuring justice for all; and

Whereas, Our nation must strive to protect, expand, and observe crime victims’ rights so that there truly is justice for victims and justice for all; and

Whereas, National Crime Victims’ Rights Week—April 13-19, 2008—provides an opportunity for us to strive to reach the goal of justice for all by ensuring that all victims are afforded their legal rights and provided with assistance as they face the financial, physical, and psychological impact of crime; and

Whereas, The Yavapai County Attorney’s Office is joining forces with victim service programs, criminal justice officials, and concerned citizens throughout Yavapai County and America to raise awareness about victims’ rights and observe the 28th National Crime Victims’ Rights Week;

Now, therefore, The Board of Supervisors does hereby proclaim the week of April 13-19, 2008, as

“National Crime Victims’ Rights Week”

And reaffirm this County’s commitment to respect and enforce victims’ rights and address their needs during National Crime Victims’ Rights Week and throughout the year; and

Express our appreciation for those victims and crime survivors who have turned personal tragedy into a motivating force to improve our response to victims of crime and build a more just community.

Carol Springer, Chairman of the Board