We were hoping to garner attention by placing our memorial Christmas tree in a public location this year. We did get lots of attention as the tree looked so beautiful in the lobby of the Houston County Court House. Our volunteers had worked diligently to make it the beautiful tree it always is, decorated with the faces of those we love.

Pat Jones received phone calls from local news agencies wanting to know the story behind the tree. Other agencies in the state called for the scoop too. Pat handled all the press putting the focus back on the victims.

Who would have guessed that that location would have caused such a stir? Attorney Billy Sheffield said that the jurors walking by the faces would not allow his clients to get a fair trial.

District Attorney Doug Valeska came to the rescue and moved the tree to his office for the week of trial and then returned it to the lobby of the courthouse for all to see and honor our loved ones.

When will victims be recognized and given the remembrance they deserve?
It’s 2012. It’s hard to believe 2011 is over. We are looking forward to the New Year and hoping it brings good health and prosperity.

With the beginning of the New Year, it reminds of two things.

1st- The Alabama Legislature convenes for their regular session beginning February 7th. You need to check out the bills that your representative and senators have pre-filed and will be filing during this term. There are many bills that will affect crime victims across the State of Alabama.

2nd- Our Annual golf tournament is just around the corner. This year our 5th Annual golf tournament is scheduled for Thursday, April 12th at the Highland Oaks Golf Course in Dothan. We are very excited to have Gary Maxwell as our Committee Chairman for this fundraiser. This is the only fundraiser for Angel House. If you would like additional information or would like to become one of our sponsors please call our office.

The ribbons are here! At Christmas our magnetic ribbons were sent to families across the state of Alabama to place on their vehicle in honor of their loved one.

This was Joyce Miller’s last endeavor to help bring honor to victims. If you have not received one and would like one please contact our office.
DONATIONS

Thank you to the following for donations to our organization. Without you our job would not be possible...

- Houston County Pre-Trial Program
- Henry County Pre-Trial Program
- Wiregrass Area United Way
- Mark Coskrey
- Michael Manring

Tis’ the season for giving

Thank you to those who donated items and cash contributions to assist the two families at Christmas time. Because of your generosity 7 children had a wonderful Christmas that otherwise would have been left out. The tragedy of losing the father was traumatic enough. Thank you for making their holiday a wonderful time!

COUNSELOR’S CORNER—

“Moving”

How long does one mourn the homicide of your loved one? The answer for this is probably, everyday of your life. However, you can honor the victims and still move from the stages of grief to find peace in a new experience. Who is the judge of when it’s time to move on?

Only the person who is dealing with the tragedy, that shattered their life forever, knows.

Sometimes we are guilty of saying, “I can’t believe they are dating, it’s been less than a year since her husband (or his wife) was murdered.”

Unless we spend that time in their shoes, we cannot imagine the loneliness they have endured.

The next relationship will probably not be like the first relationship and it may be for different reasons: companionship, financial, travel or your just need a good golf partner.

However, you could actually fall madly in love again or be completely mesmerized, if you let yourself. There is no reason to feel guilty when you are able to move on, after a good marriage, again.

Would your loved one want you to be so lonely? If so they probably weren’t the person you believed them to be.

Move on when you can.
The trial for Anthony Mitchell Money received very little justice for Denise Curry’s family.

DA Doug Valeska certainly gave it his all when he tried this case. Valeska argued that Curry died after the couple had been in a physical altercation when they pulled off to the side of the roadway where the domestic dispute continued.

“I argued because of the fight she was dazed and that he did not try to move her. If she was dazed she’s not going to see a car coming,” Valeska said. “He left her lying in the middle of the road and did nothing. She was unable to get out of the road because he assaulted her. I call it woman slaughter. I argued if you loved someone you’d make every effort to get them out of the road.”

Unfortunately the jury came back with criminally negligent homicide. The charge sounds bad, but it actually is a misdemeanor. However, when a jury is deliberating, they are not allowed to be informed on how charges are ranked or what amount of time they carry.

Mitchell Money left his girlfriend in the middle of the road after an argument and did not attempt to assist her when another vehicle was approaching. The family as well as the prosecutor feels he had assaulted her and she was unconscious and could not move on her own. One year in the county jail is the maximum amount of time this offender can receive.

Is that justice? I think not!
Barbour County News

Tuesday, November 15, and Wednesday, November 16, 2011 Circuit Judge Burt Smithart presided over an attempted murder case at the Bullock County Courthouse in Union Springs, Alabama. The court case was the state verses Vertis Anthony. The attempted murder took place at Wayne Farms in the Maintenance Department building on March 9, 2010. Bullock County District Attorney, Ben Reeves was the state’s attorney and Spence Singleton was the attorney for the defendant.

Six witnesses said they saw Vertis shoot Joe. District Attorney Reeves then questioned Vertis. DA Reeves said, “One bullet can kill a person, but when you fire six shoots, you want to kill. His story is so far-fetched under oath and he thinks he can get you be believe a fantasy story.” The DA closed saying that he does not need finger prints or gun residue. “We have six witnesses”.

The jury began deliberating at 9:44 a.m.. At 10:48 a.m., one hour and four minutes later, the jury came out and handed Judge Smithart the verdict. Vertis Anthony was asked to approach the bench. He was surrounded by Sheriff Raymond Rogers and three deputies. Judge Smithart read the verdict aloud announcing the Vertis Anthony was found guilty of Attempted Murder.

The sentencing was set for a later date.

Dale/Geneva News

On August 24, several members of Brent Cook’s family traveled to Montgomery to make sure that Matthew Leske remained in prison. Leske was convicted of manslaughter in Geneva County and sentenced to 12 years. District Attorney Kirke Adams traveled to Montgomery to speak on behalf of the family. Other representatives present were VOCAL and the Attorney General’s Office who all supported the family. The Parole Board denied Leske's parole request and ordered that he serve his sentence.
LITTLE KNOWN FACTS

Restitution and Compensation are not the same

Restitution and compensation are not the same. Many victims confuse the two.

Restitution is an amount of money ordered by a court to be paid to the circuit clerk or victims by a defendant for the defendant's criminal offense. The law states: “The clerk of the court is authorized and shall accept partial payments from defendants when directed to do so by the court, pursuant to the conditions in Section 12-19-26. The clerk of the court shall disburse restitution to victims or the authorized recipient, including partial periodic payments as ordered under any judgment, decree, or order of the circuit or district court, pursuant to Section 15-18-65 et seq. The disbursements shall be made to the victims or the authorized recipient no later than the time provided in Rule 4, Alabama Rules of Judicial Administration. The clerk of the court shall, at the end of each month, provide to the district attorney and probation office a list of the names of defendants who are delinquent in their restitution payments under a court-approved installment plan or any other deferred-payment time period specified by the court in its sentencing order.”

Compensation was established as a special fund to be known as the Alabama Crime Victims Compensation Fund. The law states: “This fund shall be placed under the management or administration of the Alabama Crime Victims Compensation Commission for purposes of providing compensation or other benefits to crime victims.”

If compensation was paid to a victim and/or the family of a victim, the court may order restitution to be paid to Alabama Crime Victims Compensation.

If the victim and/or family of a victim were not paid by Alabama Crime Victims Compensation, the court may order restitution directly to the victim or the family.

Many victims assume that if they fill out restitution paperwork for the district attorney’s office they have filed for compensation. In fact they have not.
Sponsorship for Wiregrass Angel House’s 5th Annual Golf Tournament

Please help us with our yearly fundraiser. Please know that all donations go to help with families of homicide victims in the Wiregrass area!

2012 Wiregrass Angel House Charity Golf Classic
- Helping families that have been affected by violence, especially those who have lost someone to murder-

DATE: Thursday, April 12, 2012
(Registration begins at 10 a.m.; lunch at 11 a.m.; shotgun start at noon. No rain date. No refunds.)

LOCATION: Highland Oaks Golf Course, Dothan, Alabama

SPONSORSHIPS:

_____ $10,000 Gold Sponsor: Includes EXTREMELY PROMINENT recognition on large banners, T-shirts, players’ brochure, thank you ad in newsletter, and name promotional items in golfers’ gift bags. Sponsorship also includes green fees, cart and lunch for 4 golfers.

_____ $5,000 Silver Sponsor: Includes SIGNIFICANT recognition on large banners, T-shirts, players’ brochure, thank-you ad in newsletter, and option to include promotional items in golfers’ gift bags. Sponsorship also includes green fees, cart and lunch for 4 golfers.

_____ $2,500 Bronze Sponsor: Includes VERY VISIBLE recognition on large banners, T-shirts, players’ brochure, thank-you ad in newsletter, and option to include promotional items in golfers’ gift bags. Sponsorship also includes green fees, cart and lunch for 4 golfers.

_____ $500 Hole Sponsor: Includes recognition on hole signage, T-shirts, thank-you ad in newsletter, and option to include promotional items in golfers’ gift bags. Sponsorship also includes green fees, cart and lunch for 4 golfers.

Team/Sponsor Name: ___________________________________________ E-Mail Address ____________________________________________

Contact Person: _______________________________________________ Daytime Phone: ________________________________

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Contact Gary Maxwell 334-702-7010
Victim Contacts

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State inmate parole info.
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