Douglas Valeska Honored Statewide

It was in front of a packed house at VOCAL’s (Victims of Crime and Leniency) 30th Anniversary celebration at the Capital City Club in Montgomery, Alabama, when the chairman of the board revealed that Douglas Valeska, the DA for the 20th judicial circuit was being honored for all of his achievements in working with victims’ for over the past 25 years.

“Always placing victims and their families’ first priority”, the chairman stated. He went on to say when deciding to honor Mr. Valeska the state board of directors unanimously voted to honor him for all he has accomplished for victims, not just in his circuit but across the State of Alabama.

His portrait will be hung on the “Wall of Honor” at the VOCAL state headquarters alongside that of Former Attorney General Jimmy Evans and Montgomery Co. DA Ellen Brooks.

Congratulations Mr. Valeska. You are well deserving of this award and it has been long overdue.
**Director’s Note**

The most wonderful feeling in the world is to have people to count on in your time of need. A family member called and requested assistance for Christmas with their young children.

I would like to say thank you to Diane Collier, the Miss Angel Queens, Diane Waller, and the employees of “Dawgs and Donuts” in Ozark, Alabama, for making this Christmas so special. You have gone the extra mile to make sure these children know how very special they truly are to others.

**Alabama Legislature**

The new legislative session begins this month. Please keep a watch on face book and our website to see the new bills that will be filed that affect victims in Alabama. We need every victim to be involved to let their Senator and Representative know how they feel.

**Your voice matters!**

**Barbour and Bullock County:** Representative Berry Forte (334) 687-9985 or (334) 616-1272

**Dale and Houston County:** Representative Steve Clouse (334)774-9122 or (334) 222-4469

**Geneva and Houston County:** Representative Donnie Chesteen (334) 684-2196 or (334) 449-1040

**Henry and Houston County:** Representative Dexter Grimsley (334) 889-0602 or (334) 313-8847

**Houston County:** Representative Paul Lee (334) 792-9682

**Barbour and Bullock County:** Senator Billy Beasley (334) 775-3291

**Dale, Geneva, and Houston County:** Senator Harri-Anne Smith (334) 699-3208

**Dale and Houston County:** Senator Jimmy Holley (334) 897-5181

Shelly Linderman
Miss Angel Queens

Hard to believe it’s almost been a year since our pageant. The queens for 2012-13 have been really great to work with, as well as the director, Mrs. Ashley Thomas. They have represented our organization with honor, integrity, and a true spirit of giving to others. They have donated their time at our annual vigil, placing crosses in front of Angel House to commemorate National Crime Victim’s Rights Week, assisting with putting all of our golf bags together for our annual tournament, as well as working the tournament in any way needed, assisting Angel House at our garden dedication, representing us in the National Peanut Festival Parade and other Christmas parades around the Wiregrass, and continuously working countless hours on maintaining our victims’ garden throughout the year.

A big thank you to each queen and the director of the pageant, Ashley Thomas, for helping Angel House with a family in need for Christmas this year! Thank you for the wonderful presents you provided for the children to have for Christmas.

We will miss our queens when they give up their crowns next month, but we are looking forward to the crowning of the 2013-14 queens. We know they will have big shoes to fill. Thank you girls and thank you parents for all of your hard work! The next Miss Angel pageant will be held Sunday, February 10th at the Dothan Opera House.
S.E. VOCAL Chapter News

Southeast VOCAL Chapter had their Annual Christmas Party Saturday, December 8\textsuperscript{th} at Wiregrass Angel House. The Houston County DA’s office was there in full support as well as many families. Gingerbread houses were built by the children as well as Santa puppets. A special thank you to all the members and the DA’s office for all the great food they provided.

The next support group meeting will be held Tuesday night at 6 p.m. January 15\textsuperscript{th} at Wiregrass Angel House. Dinner will be provided.

Donations

Houston County DA’s Office
Houston County Pre-Trial
Henry County Pre-Trial
IBM Employees
Wiregrass United Way

Dawgs and Donuts
Diane Collier
Mark Coskrey
Doug and Donna Valeska
Diana Waller
Christmas Open House

Wiregrass Angel House’s Christmas open house was held Wednesday, December 12th. Throughout the year so many in the criminal justice system are working to make sure that victims and their families are getting justice. We like to take this time of year to say thank you by preparing goodies as a labor of love and appreciation.

It was wonderful to see all the local law enforcement officers, prosecutors and staff from the area DA’s offices, the judges, and most importantly our victim’s family members.

This time of year is hard on so many. It was nice to see so many smiling faces: seeing them enjoying the food, fun, and fellowship.

Words of Wisdom

Do you ever wonder if the feelings of anger and pain will ever go away? Do you ever wonder - “Why can’t I get over this?” That is where the problem lies. You don’t ever get over what has happened to you when you or your loved one is a victim. It is not a problem such as being audited from the IRS or having an automobile accident.

The trauma that you have endured has hit to the core of you. You learn to get through it, never over it, and learn how to live your life with the tragedy that has occurred. It’s called “a new normal.”

When will the pain and anger go away? That is different for every victim. Sometimes it takes years. Some victims still struggle with it and many years have passed. Sometimes the anger will be all consuming and other times, it comes and goes. What one has to do is learn how to take the anger and turn it into something positive. That too is an individual decision. It is different for every victim. If we can help, give us a call.
Please keep the Hendley family in your prayers as they lost their husband and father, Joe, on December 12th. He was killed at his home in Cowarts. The funeral services were held on Sunday December 16th. The Houston County DA’s office was in attendance to show their support to the family.

Everett Morton, who murdered Patrick Dixon in 2006, was granted a new trial by the Alabama Criminal Court of Appeals, on a technicality. A re-trial is set for January 2013 in which DA Valeska stated he will once again re-try. What a tragedy the Dixon family has to once again endure to try and seek justice for Patrick.

The Houston County DA’s office attended a hearing to protest the parole Dr. Johns who was convicted in 2009 on two counts of 1st degree sexual abuse. He was denied but is scheduled for release in 2014.
Dale and Geneva County News

Thomas Pressley, who killed his step-mother, Loretta, in May of this year, pled guilty to murder and was sentenced to 30 years in prison by Judge Kenneth Quattlebaum.

Dale/Geneva County DA office held its annual law enforcement seminar in Geneva. Over 55 different law enforcement agencies were represented at the one day conference. The focus for this year’s event was bath salts and synthetic drugs. The seminar is sponsored by the DA’s office to assist local law enforcement with various types of training they may not be able to receive any other way.

Barbour/Bullock County News

Matthew Timothy Jenkins of Griffin, Ga. was arrested and charged with two counts of murder and one count of driving under the influence. Brothers Najee Brown and Marlon Brown, were traveling south and Jenkins was traveling north on South Eufaula Avenue near the Paul Lee Parkway intersection when the wreck occurred. The two brothers were in a Honda Accord, and Jenkins was in a Jeep Wrangler. Jenkins’ Wrangler reportedly “T-boned” the Accord.

The Barbour County District Attorney’s Office is also investigating the wreck.