

6-6-2001

BC "Hosts Healing the Wounds of Murder"

Boston College Law School

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BC "Hosts Healing the Wounds of Murder"

6/6/01-Boston College will be hosting the historic first National conference "Healing the Wounds of Murder" from the evening of June 6th to the morning of the 10th, in conjunction with the Murder Victims, Families for Reconciliation (MVFR), the largest national organization of families who have suffered the loss of family to murder. Among the panelists and speakers are law school faculty members Michael Cassidy, Frank Herrmann, S.J., and Phyllis Goldfarb, who was also instrumental in organizing the conference.

"The key to stopping lethal violence, the key to preserving life, is to work to help others move beyond revenge and hate as well," said Goldfarb. "The MVFR conference was convened to develop and sound this urgent message."

A number of programs in the conference relate directly to the criminal justice system and the opposition of the death penalty, including Prosecutors and Murder Victims' Families: Beginning a Dialogue, with Dean R. Michael Cassidy as a speaker; Defense Attorneys and Murder Victims' Families: Exploring the Possibilities an Dilemmas; and Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Alternatives to Violence, with Professor Martha Minow of Harvard Law School. Professor Minow taught a course called Between Vengeance and Forgiveness at BCLS in 1997.

Phyllis Goldfarb is one of the few members of the Core Organizing Committee for the conference. As one of its early supporters, she was instrumental in bringing the opportunity to host the conference to the attention of BC administrators in 1999, and assisted with grant research and writing to help fund the event. Also among her many related activities, Goldfarb was responsible for bringing the New England opening of an art installation, titled "The Waiting Room" (based on the waiting room for death row at San Quentin Prison), to the McMullen Museum at Boston College.

Frank Herrmann, S.J., BCLS faculty member and rector of the Jesuit Community, will make opening remarks at the welcoming reception for MVFR members. Frank was also vital in issuing the invitation to Cardinal Bernard Law to speak at the conference. Cardinal Law will speak at the opening plenary on the morning of Friday, June 8.

Mike Cassidy, BCLS Associate Dean of Administration and faculty member, will speak at the conference on the afternoon of Friday, June 8 at a program titled, " Prosecutors and Murder Victims' Families: Beginning A Dialogue." He will be facilitating a conversation between MVFR members and prosecutors and victim's advocates. The panel includes prosecutor Bill Welch who prosecuted Kristen Gilbert and sought the death penalty against her.

Also among the speakers are Sister Helen Prejean, Cardinal Bernard Law, BC Chancellor Donald Monan, S.J., Arun Gandhi (Mahatma's grandson) of the Center for Non-violence, Bud Welch who lost his daughter in the Oklahoma City bombing, Sam Sheppard, Jr., whose father was the model for the TV series The Fugitive, Robert Meeropol, son of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, and many other extraordinary MVFR members. Steve Earle, a Grammy award winning musician will be speaking and performing. Because of its historic importance, a film about the conference is being made.

Since 1976, MVFR has worked to end the isolation of survivors of homicide victims and to reinforce and support the notion that it is okay to lose a loved one to murder and not support the death penalty for the murderer. MVFR works actively in the areas of Public Education, Policy Reform and Victim Support. Their ongoing projects include speaking tours and a

Speakers Bureau, publication of THE VOICE newsletter, and the book, NOT IN OUR NAME: Murder Victims Families Speak Out Against the Death Penalty.

Admission to the conference is free to the entire BC community. For a complete schedule of the conference please go to: [/healing](#)

To read the Associated Press story on the conference, go to:

http://www.boston.com/dailynews/156/region/Families_of_murder_victims_who:.shtml

Updated: May 10, 2010

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