

Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women



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1989 Femicide Report Women and Children Murdered in Minnesota

The Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women monitors information about women and children murdered in our state to educate the public about the lethality of woman abuse and child abuse. We pledge to remember the women, children, and family members and/or friends who die each year from domestic violence and the woman and children who die while being used in prostitution - a system of violence against women and children. Women used in prostitution are battered women in need of protection from abuse. We also remember the women and children who were murdered by acquaintances, strangers, or unknown perpetrators.

We challenge communities to respond to battered women and their children by providing safe shelter and advocacy services, prevention education for all elementary and secondary students, laws to protect women and children, effective enforcement of those laws, and aggressive prosecution of all domestic assault crimes and all prostitution crimes targeting perpetrators, pimps, and "johns".

In Minnesota in 1989:

At least 18 women were murdered in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was a current or former husband, boyfriend, intimate partner or household/family member of the woman.

WOMEN MURDERED:

1. Marna Christenson, 44 Lakefield January 19, 1989

Marna's husband, Arthur Christenson, 59, was charged with second-degree murder, manslaughter, and criminal negligence in connection with the fire that killed Marna. Marna died of smoke inhalation and was found near the rear entrance of their home.

2. Patricia Snelson, 43 Hastings February 7, 1989

Patricia was shot five times in the chest and head by her husband, Dwayne Snelson, 40, a known batterer who then committed suicide.

10. Viola Mae Beeks, 39**Minneapolis****August 31, 1989**

Viola was shot in the face in the bedroom of her home. The man with who she had been living, Bernard Wilson, 34, was accused of killing her and charged with second-degree murder. Her teenage daughter said she saw her mother struggling with Bernard and tried to seek help. When she returned she saw her mother lying on the bed with blood coming from her face. The daughter saw Wilson come out of the bedroom with a gun. He then fired a shot to scare her. Viola was a Minneapolis Housing Patrol officer.

11. Priscilla Adams, 32**St. Paul****October 5, 1989**

Priscilla was found stabbed to death in her apartment. She was stabbed five or six times. Carl Cage, 34, Priscilla's live-in boyfriend, was charged with second-degree murder. Neighbors said they frequently heard arguments from the apartment. One neighbor said that Priscilla had talked about leaving her boyfriend because of abuse. Another neighbor said the boyfriend had pushed Priscilla down the staircase two months previously. On August 28th, police were called to the apartment. Priscilla told officers that her boyfriend had pushed her, causing her to fall and cut her mouth on the bathtub. He was arrested and booked on suspicion of domestic assault. He was released when the prosecution dismissed charges. Priscilla is survived by a nine-month old child.

12. Tracy Carlson, 19**Minneapolis****October 17, 1989**

Tracy was abducted at gunpoint and held hostage for 19 hours before she was shot to death by her former boyfriend, Michael Rehfeld, 22. He then killed himself. It was the second time that week that he had kidnapped Tracy and the third time in the last year. He was under a court order to stay away from Tracy. Friends said Rehfeld was upset that Tracy wanted to date another man. "He said, 'If I can't have you, no one will.'"

13. Daisy Hammer, 61**Minneapolis****November 2, 1989**

Daisy was beaten to death with a baseball bat in her apartment. She was found on the floor of her apartment with severe head injuries. Her boyfriend, James Phillips, 29, has been charged with her murder. Neighbors told police they had heard other domestic disputes in the past.

14. Lori Ann Behr, 30**Minneapolis****November 21, 1989**

Lori was strangled to death. Her boyfriend, Jonathan James Mudge, 31, has been charged with first-degree murder in her death. Lori was found dead at the couple's house after police responded to a call from Mudge's brother-in-law who told authorities that Mudge made hysterical statements on the telephone about killing his girlfriend. Mudge was arrested at the scene. He was charged with two counts of second-degree murder. Lori was 8 months pregnant at the time of her death.

15. Roselyn May Boswell, 30**Lonsdale****November 25, 1989**

Roselyn was shot once in the back with a shotgun. Her partly clothed body was found in the trunk of her boyfriend's car after he drove to the New Prague police station to report her death. The boyfriend, Ronald Johnson, told authorities the shooting was accidental. Johnson was charged with two counts of second-degree murder and one count of second-degree manslaughter. Roselyn is survived by four daughters from a previous relationship.

16. Bonnie Haugen, 53

Albert Lea

December 2, 1989

62-year old Vernon Bentson was charged with four counts of second-degree murder in the death of Bonnie at the Albert Lea home they shared. Police had received a call from a man at around 1 p.m. on December 3rd, saying that he and his woman friend had a fight Saturday night and that he thought she was dead.

17. Barbara Provost, 22

Forest Lake

December 29, 1989

Barbara's sadly burned body was found in a wildlife area. She had been drenched with a gasoline-type substance and set afire. She died at the scene. An autopsy indicated she died of smoke inhalation, but that medical complications from severe burns, a blow to the chest, and injuries to internal organs may have contributed to her death. Law enforcement reported that her body had a hole in the left side of the chest, but she had not been shot. Her husband, Robert Provost, 23, was charged with second-degree murder for burning Barbara to death. Barbara had been granted a court order for protection in the past and had called the police for help in the past.

18. Catherine Jones, 27

Minneapolis

December 31, 1989

Catherine was stabbed to death in her apartment. Her boyfriend, Lloyd Thunberg, 36, was charged with second-degree murder in her death. He allegedly stabbed her because she wanted to end a 7-year relationship.

1989 FEMICIDE REPORT - Women and Children Murdered" - is compiled from news accounts and information provided by law enforcement agencies, county attorneys, court administrators, battered women's programs, and family members and friends of murder victims. Please contact us if you have updated or more complete information on any homicide.

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