



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

FATALITIES IN PENNSYLVANIA

“Let’s not forget the lives of these innocent people”

2010

A Report of the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence

169 Domestic Violence Deaths in 2010

“Oh God, what did I do to deserve this?”

Those were the last words of one Pennsylvania victim of domestic violence in 2010, uttered as he was being beaten to death with a garden paver. He could have been speaking for all **133 victims** documented in this annual fatality report.

“I told you, Tammy, that I’d do this to you. I told you I was coming.”

Those were the words of one man as he viciously stabbed his ex-girlfriend in front of her mother. He was one of 130 perpetrators committing lethal acts of domestic violence in 2010. Thirty-six perpetrators killed themselves or were killed by police or others intervening to protect victims. That adds up to a total of **169 domestic violence-related fatalities** for the year.

While 2010 didn’t set a record – 2009’s fatality numbers were slightly higher – it continued an upward trend in domestic violence lethality since 2008. The chart on the back captures the deadly toll during the last decade. **Pennsylvania lost 1,532 women, men and children to domestic violence between 2001 and 2010.** That’s about 400 more deaths than U.S. troops endured in the War in Afghanistan in the same period.

How We Count Deaths

We primarily rely on media accounts of crimes to compile fatality numbers because no central, complete database of domestic violence deaths exists in this Commonwealth.

We use a conservative method of identifying domestic violence deaths. We do not include cases where no arrests have been made or where the relationship between victim and perpetrator is unclear. We count fatalities involving current and former intimate partners; new partners killed by jealous former partners; family members; and bystanders and interveners in domestic violence situations.

We exclude child abuse and neglect deaths because they are reported by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare.

The Ones We Miss

Sadly, we know that, as is true every year, this report misses some victims whose stories never made it into newspapers or onto websites because they lived in poor, crime-ridden neighborhoods that don’t receive much media coverage. We miss other victims if the police, in announcing deaths, and the media in reporting them, fail to identify the relationship between victim and perpetrator or the motive for the killing. And some domestic violence murders remain unsolved.

We also know, from local advocates’ anecdotal accounts, that some victims take their own lives after years of unrelenting abuse. We mourn for all the victims of domestic violence – counted and uncounted.

133 Victims, 36 Perpetrators Dead

Some Statistics from 2010

- 169 people died in 135 domestic violence incidents.
- 61 victims were shot.
- 24 victims were stabbed.
- Victims were beaten, strangled, burned, poisoned, suffocated, tortured and drowned.
- Perpetrators used bare hands, baseball bats, a claw hammer, a hatchet and a shovel.
- 78 women and 55 men were victims.
- 104 men and 26 women were perpetrators.
- Youngest victim was a 3 ½-week old baby.
- Oldest victim was an 87-year-old woman.
- Youngest perpetrator was a 16-year-old boy.
- Oldest perpetrator was an 87-year-old man.
- Victims included a state police trooper, two people in wheelchairs, a woman with developmental disabilities and two good samaritans.
- Perpetrators included a police officer and a college professor.
- 2 people attacked in 2009 died in 2010 of their injuries.

Fatalities by County

County	Victim(s)	Perpetrator(s)	Total
Adams	3	0	3
Allegheny	11	6	17
Armstrong	0	1	1
Beaver	3	1	4
Bedford	0	1	1
Berks	2	1	3
Bradford	2	0	2
Bucks	5	1	6
Butler	0	1	1
Cambria	2	0	2
Carbon	1	1	2
Chester	4	2	6
Crawford	2	1	3
Cumberland	1	0	1
Dauphin	4	1	5
Delaware	4	0	4
Erie	4	1	5
Fayette	4	1	5
Franklin	6	2	8

County	Victim(s)	Perpetrator(s)	Total
Juniata	1	0	1
Lancaster	2	0	2
Lebanon	2	1	3
Lehigh	2	1	3
Luzerne	4	1	5
McKean	2	0	2
Mercer	1	0	1
Montgomery	5	2	7
Northampton	8	1	9
Northumberland	1	1	2
Philadelphia	32	1	33
Schuylkill	1	1	2
Snyder	0	1	1
Somerset	0	1	1
Venango	2	1	3
Washington	3	1	4
Wayne	1	0	1
Westmoreland	6	2	8
York	2	0	2
Totals	133	36	169

“I will never see my mom again. I miss my mom.”

The Other Casualties

Loss of life – and all the heartache and unrealized potential that accompanies it – is the highest price families and communities pay for domestic violence. That’s why this report focuses on fatalities. What it doesn’t convey are the other costs of domestic violence – in injuries, property damage, lost work productivity and, perhaps most poignantly, the lost innocence and betrayed trust of all the child witnesses.

About the Cover

The photograph on the cover is from the scene of a horrific quadruple homicide in Northampton County on June 26, 2010, in which three members of one family and a good samaritan were killed by an ex-boyfriend of one of the victims. The quote comes from District Attorney John Morganelli’s remarks to the jury before it sentenced the killer to death. The photograph is reprinted with permission of The Morning Call. All rights reserved.

A DEADLY DECADE

PENNSYLVANIA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DEATHS (VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS) – 2001-2010

