

The Silent Witness Project

The Silent Witness Project is part of a national initiative to remember those murdered in acts of domestic violence. The original Silent Witness Exhibit was conceived by an ad hoc group of women artists in Minnesota who wanted to bring attention to the serious consequences of violence against women. The Minnesota exhibit included figures representing 33 women killed by husbands, lovers, friends, and family members. Since 1990, Silent Witness exhibits have been created in all 50 states.

The Delaware Coalition Against Domestic Violence joined the national initiative by creating its Silent Witness Project in 1996. Delaware's Silent Witness Project is an exhibit of fourteen people who died as a result of domestic violence in 1995. The exhibit includes seven women, one man, and six children illustrating the ultimate horror and tragedy of domestic violence. The fifteenth "universal" figure is intended to represent all Delaware victims of domestic homicide.

On October 18, 1997, the Delaware Silent Witness Project joined with Silent Witness exhibits from other participating states for a march against domestic violence in Washington, D.C. The ultimate goal of the Silent Witness National Initiative was to eliminate domestic homicides by the year 2010.

Since its launch in 1996, DCADV's Silent Witness Project has been displayed at many sites within the state. The following are some of the places where they have been seen:

- University of Delaware, Delaware Technical and Community College, Wilmington Campus, Legislative Hall, Carvel State Office Building, Georgetown State Service Center, Christiana Mall, Dover Public Safety Building, Hercules, The Capitol, Boys and Girl's Club of Sussex County, Dover Air Force Base, Beebe Medical Center, BayHealth Medical Hospital- Milford, Kent General Hospital, Nanticoke Memorial Hospital, Christiana Hospital, Al Dupont Children's Hospital, Dover Sheraton, Wyndham Hotel and Wesley College.

Groups holding events where they would like to bring attention to the devastating effects of domestic violence borrow the exhibit, especially during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Groups that regularly display the exhibit include:

- Victims' Rights Task Force, Witney's Lights, Seeds of Greatness, DCADV committees, and more.

Wherever the Witnesses have been displayed, the response has been dramatic and positive. Many people stop and ask questions, commenting on the impact the brief stories of these individuals have had on them. Others are also shocked by the tragic and direct effect such violence sometimes has on innocent children.