

In 1990, an ad hoc group of women artists and writers, upset about the growing number of women in Minnesota being murdered by their partners or acquaintances, joined together with several other women's organizations to form Arts Action Against Domestic Violence. They felt an urgency to do something that would speak out against the escalating domestic violence in their state, something that would commemorate the lives of the 26 women whose lives had been lost in 1990 as a result of domestic violence. After much brainstorming, they decided to create 26 free-standing, life-sized red wooden figures, each one bearing the name of a woman who once lived, worked, had neighbors, friends, family, children--whose life ended violently at the hands of a husband, ex-husband, partner, or acquaintance. A twenty-seventh figure was added to represent those uncounted women whose murders went unsolved or were erroneously ruled accidental. The organizers called the figures the Silent Witnesses.

Inspired by the impact of the Exhibit on many lives, a few of the project supporters determined, in mid-1994, to set a larger goal, namely the formation of a national initiative dedicated to the elimination of domestic murder using a five part process model, starting with the creation of Silent Witnesses Exhibits in all 50 states. Within one year (September 1995) a total of 800 Silent Witnesses had been created representing women who were killed as a result of domestic violence in seventeen states. There are now forty-six states who have joined the initiative.

North Carolina is one of them utilizing over 60 silhouettes representing fallen adult and child victims. We have 18 silhouettes here in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.



For more information on
The Silent Witness National Initiative
go to www.silentwitness.net

Or contact your State Representative
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