



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 26, 2021

### **INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE VICTIMS REMEMBERED IN 10TH ANNUAL MEMORIAL**

*Violence Free Minnesota Hosts Procession and Memorial For 28 Victims of Intimate Partner Homicide*

SAINT PAUL – On January 26 Violence Free Minnesota, the statewide coalition of over 90 programs working to address relationship abuse, hosted a day of remembrance for Minnesota’s 28 victims of intimate partner homicide in 2020. The day included a procession of cars to the Capitol followed by an online memorial featuring speakers, poetry, and artwork to honor Minnesota’s victims. This is the 10<sup>th</sup> annual memorial hosted by the coalition.

“While we collect information on intimate partner homicide, we understand that each victim has a story beyond their murder.” said Violence Free Minnesota communications director Becky Smith. “For ten years, the memorial has given us the opportunity to join in reflection and commitment towards a better world.”

While Violence Free Minnesota will not release their annual *Homicide Report: Relationship Abuse in Minnesota* until October, the organization stated that of the 28 known victims, 19 were killed by a current or former intimate partner, 3 were children aged two and under, and six were bystanders murdered in domestic violence related situations. Four bystanders were family members and bystanders were attempting to intervene in a violent situation. At least 16 minor children are now left without a parent due to intimate partner violence.

At noon, a procession of cars with large purple bows attached to the hoods made their way through downtown St. Paul towards the Capitol. Along the way they rolled down their windows and turned their radios to WFNU 94.1 to listen to a recording of the 28 victim names. A little after noon, with hazard lights flashing, the cars parked along Rev. Martin Luther King Blvd. in front of the Capitol while drivers exited their cars to document the event.

Later that afternoon, a virtual memorial was held to honor the 28 victims of 2020 and included remarks from Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan; Minnesota State Senator Mary Kunesh; Minnesota Department of Health Commissioner Jan Malcolm; and Artyce Thomas, executive director of Women’s Shelter and Support Center in Rochester.

“While we can’t take away the painful loss, we can work together in their memory towards a safer Minnesota,” said Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan. “As the Governor and I announced the budget today, we kept these priorities in mind during a challenging year.”

Representative Tim Miller, Representative Ruth Richardson, and Senator Julie Rosen read the names of the victims prior to 28 seconds of silence. The program concluded with a poem written by Elena Anderson, founder and facilitator of Writing to Wholeness workshops for survivors of gender-based violence accompanied by the artwork of Lori Greene, co-creator of the nation’s first Survivor Memorial located in Minneapolis..

On Tuesday evening the I-35W bridge was lit purple, the color of domestic violence awareness, to conclude the day of remembrance.

If you are a victim experiencing abuse, please contact DayOne at 866-223-1111 to connect with services.