



INAUGURAL EDITION

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VOLUME I, NO. 1

HELP US CHOOSE THE NAME FOR OUR NEW E-NEWSLETTER!

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Meet Mary Byron

Meet Mary Byron. Young woman. Daughter. Little sister. Granddaughter. Niece. Cousin. Friend. Best Friend. Lover of animals, especially horses. Amateur artist. Average student. Prom-goer. Catholic high school graduate. Church-goer. Beauty school student. Hairdresser. Co-worker. Dreamer wanting to open her own beauty salon.

Girlfriend. Ex-girlfriend. Young woman who dared to say NO. Rape and assault survivor scared for her safety. Woman who bravely dared to report what he had done. Woman who trusted in police. Woman who counted on the system. Believer that justice would be done. Woman who was led to believe that the man who hurt her—the man she knew was still a danger to her—was safely locked behind bars. Woman who, armed with that knowledge, dared to return to work, to live her life, to celebrate her 21st birthday. Woman shot and killed by a man she thought once loved her. Young woman mourned deeply by her family, her friends and coworkers, her church, her community.

Woman whose legacy lives on despite one man's rage and violence. Woman who inspired the creation of VINE (Victim Information and Notification Everyday) to save lives. Woman in whose name more than \$1,000,000 has been awarded to celebrate innovative methods to end intimate partner violence. Woman in whose name we strive to bring justice, protection, and survival to other victims of intimate partner violence. No other family should experience the pain that Mary's felt. We are The Mary Byron Project, and we are enhancing justice to end intimate partner violence because people like Mary, who believe the system will protect them, should be protected by it.



From the Executive Director

Happy Anniversary to us! The Mary Byron Project is 20 years old this year. We're kicking off the celebration with the inaugural edition of our e-newsletter! You can expect to get it every month going forward. It will be chock full of information about the Mary Byron Project's history, our current projects and upcoming events, and information about what is going on around the state and nation concerning intimate partner violence. But you probably noticed that our newsletter is lacking a critical element—a name. We want you to be part of helping us get one. Make your suggestion or suggestions by email to info@marybyronproject.org on or before February 7th. We'll narrow the list down to our favorites and then turn to social media for voting.

In this month's issue I invite you to meet Mary Byron—the inspiration behind our work. Think not just of the tragedy of Mary's murder, but remember how remarkable she was in life and what a legacy she has left.

I encourage you to check out our prior Celebrating Solutions and Roth Award winners to see if you can predict which organization will take home the final \$20,000 Celebrating Solutions award this year. I hope you'll be persuaded to take action to keep Amelia Forsting's killer in prison. And I welcome you to keep tabs on legislation that might be important in the fight against intimate partner violence.

Finally, I urge you to acknowledge the desperate need for the work we are doing to make the legal system better for survivors of intimate partner violence. A recent American Bar Association Journal article providing tips for how to dress for the courtroom advised that a domestic violence survivor vying for child custody and supervised visits should dress in a floral print dress and cardigan sweater instead of a power suit because the former would "play more sympathetically with a judge."

My first response was to grumble under my breath at the outdated and sexist assumptions that characterize such advice. My second response was to sigh in despair because the advice rings true for so many courtrooms across the country. Our judges should know better. They should know that intimate partner violence occurs in all levels of social strata. Would a judge ever think a man dressed in a suit was not a "real victim" of a street robbery because his choice of attire shows that he would have known better than to get himself in a situation to get robbed or because he's too smart or too powerful to be victimized? Of course not. And every judge should know that being well-dressed, having a successful career, or being an otherwise upstanding citizen does not put one out of the reach of perpetrators of intimate partner violence. Sometimes it makes it harder to get out of their reach because system participants who are supposed to help end the abuse are unwilling to believe the abuse occurred due to their preconceived notions of what intimate partner looks like. Won't you help to end these kinds of stereotypes and uninformed opinions in the legal system and everywhere they occur? Share this newsletter. Share Mary's story. Share in our mission of enhancing justice to end intimate partner violence.

How We Celebrate Solutions!

The Celebrating Solutions Awards were created in 2003 to find and recognize innovative programs around the country working creatively to end intimate partner violence. We looked beyond "best practices" and crisis response. Our goal was to find solutions that had proven effective in one community and could and should be copied across the nation. We were inspired by VINE and its innovative technology that increased victim safety by providing location and release data of imprisoned offenders. As VINE showed us, an innovative program in one community can make a difference, but incredible impact can be made by spreading that same program throughout the country. We started by giving 4 Celebrating Solutions awards per year in 2003, and in 2012 we added the Roth Award, earmarked specifically for programs that addressed the needs of underserved populations. Between 2003 and 2018 we awarded 60 Celebrating Solutions and 7 Roth Awards, and over \$1,000,000 in funds, to programs in 30 different states across the US. To learn more about prior winning programs, visit [our Celebrating Solutions page](#). In celebration of the Mary Byron Project's 20th Anniversary this year, we will bestow one final Celebrating Solutions Award to one of our former winners. The Celebrating Solutions "Award for Excellence" will be awarded to the program that has best continued its legacy of innovation and inspiration to ending intimate partner violence and will come with a \$20,000 prize.



Law Students Donate Time to MBP

During winter break, the Mary Byron Project (MBP) hosted 10 law students from Brandeis School of Law at the University of Louisville. The students selected MBP from other available non-profit and public sector legal service programs to complete required public service hours as part of the Samuel L. Greenebaum Public Service Program. More than 100 organizations provide service opportunities for students through the Greenebaum Program. The program exists to aid in improving the legal system and providing legal services to persons of limited means and to instill in students the desire to donate legal services throughout their careers. MBP's volunteers included students who had just finished their first semester of law school and students who this month entered their last semester of law school. Students came together for an orientation to MBP at Appriss' Louisville Headquarters on December 10, 2019. They were divided into three groups and assigned legal research projects. Students researched stalking and domestic and dating violence and compiled legal resources that will be used to help survivors of intimate partner violence through our Appellate Advocacy Program. Each student gave at least 30 hours of their time to help MBP enhance justice to end intimate partner violence!

Proposed Legislation of Interest

The Kentucky General Assembly is in session in Frankfort. It's a budget year, which sometimes restricts the attention given to other legislation, but it hasn't stopped important legislation from being proposed. Here are some of the bills you might be interested in following. Use the links to find the full text, proposed amendments to, and current status of each bill.

HB 45, An Act relating to firearms and declaring an emergency, sponsored by G. Brown Jr., C. Booker, K. Flood, N. Kulkarni, R. Meeks, A. Scott. In addition to other restrictions on the sale and transfer of firearms, including assault weapons, the bill proposes to amend KRS 403.735(2) to require courts issuing a domestic violence order of protection, modifying such an order, or finding a violation of such an order to determine whether there is a substantial risk that the respondent may use or threaten to use a firearm unlawfully against the person for whose protection the order is issued; and if so, the order must prohibit the respondent from possessing firearms and order surrender of those firearms.

<https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/record/20rs/hb45.html>

HB 76, An Act relating to firearms possession, sponsored by N. Kulkarni, G. Brown Jr. This bill creates a Class C felony offense for possession of a firearm (1) by an individual convicted of violating a domestic violence or interpersonal protective order by the use or attempted use of physical force or use or attempted use of a deadly weapon or dangerous instrument or (2) by an individual who is the subject of a domestic violence or interpersonal protective order. The bill also requires surrender of all firearms within 24 hours by respondents against whom protective orders are entered.

<https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/record/20rs/hb76.html>

HB 105, An Act relating to interpersonal protective orders, sponsored by S. Westrom, G. Brown Jr., C. Massey. This bill permits mental health professionals or clergy persons to seek an interpersonal protective order against a patient who stalks or sexually assaults them.

<https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/record/20rs/hb105.html>

HB 122, An Act relating to leave from employment for crime victims, sponsored by M. Cantrell, G. Brown Jr., S. Westrom. This bill prohibits employers from discharging, discriminating, or retaliating against employees who are crime victims due to attendance in court or other legal or investigative proceedings associated with the criminal prosecution.

<https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/record/20rs/hb122.html>

HB 131, An Act relating to the reporting of statistics involving domestic violence, sponsored by R. Huff. This bill requires annual reporting of certain statistics regarding domestic violence homicides.

<https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/record/20rs/hb131.html>

HB 216, An Act relating to interpersonal violence, sponsored by W. Thomas, K. Banta, C. Booker, T. Branham Clark, M. Cantrell, J. DuPlessis, J. Graviss, M. Hart, J. Jenkins, S. Lewis, P. Minter, K. Moser, D. Osborne, P. Pratt, M. Prunty, D. Schamore, J. Sims Jr, C Stevenson, S. Westrom, L. Willner, L. Yates. This bill defines certain conduct towards a domestic animal (pet) as domestic violence and abuse and dating violence and abuse for purposes of issuing a protective order and allows the court to award possession of domestic animals (pets) to the petitioner upon issuance of a protective order.

<https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/record/20rs/hb216.html>

HB 256, An Act relating to the rights of victims of sexual offenses, sponsored by J. Fischer, C. Massey. This bill requires involuntary termination of parental rights for a parent who was convicted of a felony sex offense for the acts leading to the child's conception.

https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/recorddocuments/bill/20RS/hb256/orig_bill.pdf

SB 15, An Act proposing to create a new section of the Constitution of Kentucky relating to crime victims' rights, sponsored by W. Westerfield, D. Thayer, J. Adams, R. Girdler, D. Harper Angel; SB 80, An Act relating to crime victims' rights, sponsored by W. Westerfield, D. Harper Angel. These bills propose a state constitutional amendment, which must be ratified by voters in the November election, creating certain constitutional rights for crime victims, including the right to be notified of and heard in regard to proceedings involving release, pleas, sentencing, pardons, and commutations of sentence. The bills propose certain amendments to Kentucky's statutory Victim Bill of Rights, which will become effective only upon ratification of the constitutional amendment. These changes include expanding the definition of victim to extend the enumerated rights to victims of all felonies and certain misdemeanors.

<https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/record/20rs/sb15.html>;

<https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/record/20rs/sb80.html>.

Action for Amelia

On April 24, 2016, 21-year old Amelia Forsting was shot and killed by a trained weapons expert--her husband, Damien Lacambra. Her 46-day-old baby was only a few feet away. The trial was in December 2017. Despite overwhelming evidence, the jury did not convict Amelia's killer of murder. Instead, he was convicted of second-degree manslaughter. Although sentenced to 10 years in prison, he was first eligible for parole in April 2018, only 2 years after killing Amelia and just 4 months after his conviction. Thankfully, his parole was denied at that time, due in part to the efforts of Amelia's family and friends and concerned people like you. However, in less than two weeks—on February 10th—he is up for parole again. Will you help? Tell the Kentucky State Parole Board that 4 years in prison is not enough for taking Amelia's life. Amelia's son will never again be held by his mother, have her kiss his "boo-boos", or hear her read a bedtime story. You can help keep his mother's killer behind bars. Will you join with us in saying that parole after only 4 years is not justice? Learn more about Amelia's story and sign the petition at: <https://www.change.org/p/kentucky-parole-board-kentucky-parole-board-deny-parole-for-damien-lacambra-inmate-no-296119>.



[Help Us Name Our Newsletter!](#)

Think you have a good idea for what we should call our new E-Newsletter? Email your suggestions to info@marybyronproject.org by February 7, and then look for our poll on social media to vote for your favorite. Winner will be announced in next month's edition!

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