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JUSTICE COALITION'S VICTIMS' ADVOCATE

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We'll never stop searching for John

By Peg Rowan

In a quiet East Arlington neighborhood, faded yellow ribbons still hang from mailboxes and trees. Although the ribbons have faded, the memory of John Rowan, Jr., has not. On February 23, 2001, John – father, son, husband, brother and friend – went missing, leaving behind the most important thing in his life, his family.

John immigrated to the United States, to Jacksonville, right after high school in 1985 when hard times had hit Ireland. He came with his wife, Caroline, who was his high school sweetheart, with dreams of starting his own company. He worked hard to achieve his goals but never forgot his family values. He sent money to his parents – John, Sr., and me – to help during lean times in Ireland, and he continually urged us to immigrate, as well.

After we came to the United States, John and his dad developed a land-clearing business that grew rapidly as they acquired many pieces of machinery and employed several people. John was offered a very large job that would require him to hire more help; however, he decided instead to form a partnership with two Lebanese brothers, Mohammad and Rafic Itani.

In 1993, the Dynamic Land company was formed, operating out of a small office near Atlantic Blvd. The partners agreed that John would be in charge of sales, operations and building business relationships. Rafic Itani entitled himself office manager, taking care of all business and financial transactions, while Mohammad assumed all maintenance responsibilities. In 1995, they built their office and yard for all the machinery at 340 Lee Road, the beginning of one of the largest land-clearing businesses in Jacksonville.

As the business prospered, John confided to us some of his concerns about the company and financial transactions that had taken place without his consent. He also confided in some about his concern for his life based on what ever else he had found out. After months of being uncomfortable with the direction the company was headed, he decided to leave the partnership and set in place plans to start his own company. Unfortunately, that day never came.

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John Rowan, Jr.

“Call the people together”

5th Annual TOGETHER WE CAN Breakfast



2006 TWC attendees: Standing (l-r) are Emcee Kyle Meenan (Ch. 12), Wendy Hallowell, Rev. Mark Griffin, Fire Chief Rick Barrett, Judges Gary Flower and Lance Day, Ted Hires, Joey Vaughn, and Rogers Holmes. Seated (l-r) are Nassau County Sheriff Tommy Seagraves, JSO Undersheriff Frank Mackesy, Jaguars DE Paul Spicer, Ann Dugger, and Dr. Barry Steinberg, Chief of Maxillofacial Surgery at Shands (and JSO's "SWAT Doc")

Twelve years ago when Ted Hires founded a small grass roots organization to advocate for victims of violent crime, he adopted as the Justice Coalition's motto: *Together we can, together we will, make Jacksonville a safer place to live.*

What a powerful word – *together*.

Webster's Dictionary defines it as "one gathering, company or body: *Call the people together*; bring two or more persons together in cooperation, with united action: *to undertake a task together.*"

How appropriately this describes the purpose of the Justice Coalition's 5th annual TOGETHER WE

CAN Breakfast on Feb. 22, held again this year at the beautiful San Jose Country Club. It is a time when local businesses, city leaders and other citizens in Northeast Florida unite in a common goal to make our community safer.

No matter how many efficient, *Together We Can...*, Continued on page 4

Tina McQuaig: Her death remains a mystery

By Shirley Shaw

It's been almost seven years since a young wife and mother disappeared after leaving work one day – four years since her remains were found in woods on Cecil Commerce property. And detectives are no closer to solving the case than they were back then.

What happened to Tina McQuaig? Was someone waiting as she left her job as a Pharmacy Technician at Shands Hospital March 15, 2000? Did he, she, they follow her to her car, force themselves into it when she unlocked the door? What was their intent?

Did they kill her in the vehicle and drive to the Cecil property to dump her body? Or did they force her to drive there, then murder her and drive her car back to Wal-Mart? What

transpired those final, awful moments of her life? The Medical Examiner's report stated that she died under violent circumstances.

These questions and many more have haunted her family all this time. Tina – the loving wife of Ottis and mother of 4-year-old Tyler – was only 27 when she was murdered. At first, her family endured the agony of not knowing her whereabouts, wondering if she was alive somewhere and being mistreated, but as the months and then years slowly passed, they feared the worst.

Those fears were realized when a surveying crew found her remains on Dec. 26, 2002, although the Rices had to wait three months for positive DNA identification. An email dated March 24, 2003, from her mother, Linda Rice, reveals the family's heartbreak:



Tina McQuaig

It has been determined that the remains are definitely our precious Tina. For ten long weeks we have been
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