

Remembering Ted

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

was informed about victim issues, ordinary law-abiding citizens would get involved. His proposed vehicle for getting the stories out was a newspaper.

Volunteer experts in the field of law and victim advocacy were recruited to write articles. A founder of LIV, I was hired as a consultant to help organize and edit the first edition, which was initially named *The First Coast Victims' Advocate* and later shortened to *The Victims' Advocate*. Jim Bailey, owner of Bailey Publishing and Communications, Inc., produced the finished product. To the surprise of many, Ted pulled it off, and the first issue was published in March, 1996.

Ted's major stipulation was that the paper would always feature a victim's story as the lead article on the front page. The first issue told about Ryan Hammette, a 17-year-old high school senior who was beaten and shot by a gang while riding his bike in Ortega. It also featured a centerfold informing the public of violent prisoners about to be released due to lenient sentencing guidelines and early release laws.

The premiere edition was sponsored by Charles Kemp of Top Choice Poultry, the first of a number of businessmen and friends who underwrote the cost of the paper. Whenever the support was not there, the cost was underwritten by Ted himself. His rationale was,

"Anything worth fighting for is worth investing in."

Ted's restless spirit soon resulted in both a radio and television show dedicated to issues about advocacy for victims in Jacksonville. From time to time, he posted crime statistics on the Daily Billboard, with JC's phone number. The secret word is founder. He used his media contacts to educate the public about the history of crime and punishment, pointing out that in ancient history offenders were made accountable to victims and their families. He explained how victims became nonentities in the justice system. While our elected leaders pushed to

restore the rights of convicted criminals, he hoped to restore the rights of victims.

Ted was a family man, whose expressed devotion for his wife, children and grandchildren also extended to victims. It was not uncommon for Ted to arrange for temporary lodging, food, security systems, lawyers, as well as court advocacy for victims.

Ted Hires' death on December 17, 2008, was untimely, unexpected and tragic. He will be greatly missed.

Joan Taylor was the first editor of the Victim's Advocate. We appreciate her sharing memories of Ted and JC's early days.

Police-involved shootings, the issues that drive them

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

recommended in the JCCI murder study.

"We are in the breach"

In the coming weeks you are going to be hearing me speak about something that is of utmost importance, and that is the rise in the number of people who are attempting to harm or kill our police officers, and the number of officers who have been forced to respond with deadly force. I'm going to break down all the FACTS that contribute to this issue.

First, people who aren't allowed to have guns legally will resort to stealing them. Murderous intent doesn't go away simply because we declare a war on murder. Criminal behavior doesn't stop just because laws get tough and we demand stronger prosecution. It curtails some behavior by forcing some people to disarm, but it doesn't solve the problem.

In 2008 we had more gun retailers targeted in burglaries than in years past. Citywide, police reports referencing stolen guns rose from 1058 in 2007 to 1359 in 2008. More illegal weapons in the hands of criminals equals more dangerous situations on the street when police confront

these people.

We have arrested more adults and juveniles for violent felonies in each of the past five years. And in those deadly encounters with the police, more of them are armed than ever before.

But you need to understand that we must go where the crime and danger are now. Everything we do is strategic in this agency, and our tactical deployments reflect that. We have identified those areas most highly affected by gun crime and those criminals who are most likely to engage in this behavior. We've focused our covert operations on violent criminals and their activities. Whether it's gang activity, crime that is crossing the border to and from Clay County, or drug and street vendettas, our detectives and patrol officers are utilizing all the tools and data at our disposal to laser-focus our attention on these issues.

We are being attacked more, because we are doing what is expected of us. We are in the breach: putting the pressure on criminals to lay down their weapons and stop offending.

Since the inception of Operation Safe Streets in 2006, and the overtime

money that was spent to flood these areas with off-duty officers out talking to citizens and knocking on doors, we have seen sustainable increases in citizen tips. Even when the overtime funding ran out, calls to First Coast Crime Stoppers still increased more than 200 percent.

We are getting more guns off the streets. But they are plentiful, and believe me, as soon as one is seized by us, another illegal weapon will be found by those who want them. Preliminary data show that while many people believe there has been a significant increase in the use of assault weapons, actually their numbers have risen a bit but they remain a low percentage of our overall firearm seizures. The use of handguns, which are cheaper and easier to get, and easier to conceal, remains the greatest percentage of firearms used in crimes.

What are the answers?

We're going to keep doing what we know is working. This year you will learn more about enhancements in intelligence sharing by officers on the street; we will

continue to utilize the 287(g) program that removes illegal aliens arrested in crimes and further enhance our public communication and education.

We are re-doubling our efforts to get and keep citizens engaged in our good fight by asking them to join in with us. Report crime, join a ShAdCo or CPAC and become a part of the change you want made in this city.

We can no longer afford to watch single mothers try to raise boys into manhood without the help of mentors, tutors, after school programs, our churches and every resource we have as a community.

What funds these intervention and prevention programs? A viable tax base – a great portion of which continues to choose to live outside Duval County. Also, with a high [school] dropout rate, divorce rate, illegitimacy rate, illiteracy rate and socio-economic indicators placing more of Jacksonville's youth in a "high risk" category, we diminish the chances of these young people becoming successful, tax-paying adults. We have to make sure that we are addressing the erosion of our tax base, and our future.

P.O.P.S.

The Justice Coalition appreciates the support of its *Positively Outrageous Partners*

AlphaStaff, Inc.
Arrow Brick
Avery Framing
Specialist, LLC
Chip Avery

Builders FirstSource
DL Walker Concrete
David Walker

Fastening Systems, Inc.
Bob Frosio

WW Gay Mechanical
Contractors, Inc.
Miller Electric
Buck Autrey

Poole Management
Company

Lockwood Holmes
Lou Webber Tires
Ron Wood

Development Corp.

Ronnie Fussell
T & S Masonry
Stanton Mills
Walker Block
Rob Viens

J.B. Coxwell
Contracting, Inc.

Jensen Civil
Construction
Stephen Jensen
Marketmasters
Jiffy Lube

Troy Taylor INSURANCE AGENCY

TROY TAYLOR
Independent Agent

Tel: (904) 389-7514

Tel: (904) 387-2461

Fax: (904) 387-0356

troytaylorinsurance.com

1128 Edgewood Avenue South, Jacksonville, Florida

We sell...

- Auto
- Homeowners
- Flood
- Commercial and Bond Insurance

Tribute to Ted Hires

By Sheriff John Rutherford

Ted was a great brother in Christ and I was proud to call him my friend. Many people don't remember, but early on our relationship was a little rocky. He was introduced to the criminal justice system by a couple of robbery suspects and found that it was more responsive to criminals that it was to their victims.

Ted was not only right, but he was determined to change the system. Through the Justice Coalition, which he founded, Ted changed for better the way victims are served by the criminal justice system in Jacksonville and across the state of Florida.

In the end, there was no better friend and advocate for law enforcement than my good friend Ted Hires.