

7th annual *Together We Can* Campaign

By Shirley Shaw

Despite an early morning downpour of rain and the threat of a tornado, more than 300 friends of the Justice Coalition gathered at the FOP Lodge for its annual Together We Can fundraiser. Originally planned to acknowledge the contribution Ted Hires made to the city of Jacksonville, the event now became a tribute to him and his tremendous legacy.

Emcee Kyle Meenan, First Coast News anchor/ reporter, once again skillfully facilitated the program from the opening prayer by Pastor Dan Jones, the Pledge of Allegiance led by JFRD Chief Randy White, "God Bless America" sung by Miranda Carr to remarks by Mayor John Peyton, Sheriff Rutherford and several victims.

The mayor told how he met Ted Hires at a World Series baseball game in the early 90s and was later honored to be a founding board member of the Justice Coalition. As the overflow crowd dined on a delicious breakfast prepared by members of the FOP Lodge, Peyton expressed his appreciation for those attending to support the Justice Coalition, "one of the strong driving forces in the community that does work no one else can do - and that is looking out for victims...to meet their needs...and try to make Jacksonville safer."

Sheriff Rutherford spoke briefly about the importance of the partnership between local law enforcement and the Justice Coalition. "What they do for victims is incredibly important, but what they do for law enforcement is equally important. They are a conduit for communication with the community. They help us get the message out, not only through the *Victims' Advocate*, but in press conferences that get tips coming in...to help us get the bad guys off the street more quickly."

Sarah Mills spoke about her shock when she learned her big sister, Donna Mills, was murdered by a bullet fired from the street into her bedroom, and how the Justice Coalition has assisted with press conferences to announce rewards for information leading to the arrest of DeeDee's murderer(s).

Judith Chapple told how her lovely, intelligent daughter, Kelli, made one bad decision - to visit a man she had just met - that resulted in both of them being killed. Working with the Justice Coalition, Judith



Mayor John Peyton and Sheriff Rutherford are joined by other sheriffs, judges, state prosecutors, elected officials and local businessmen.



Mayor John Peyton and Fitzhugh Powell



Wanda Hires with Bill Gay, one of the Title Sponsors



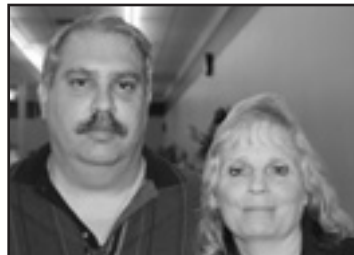
From the State Attorney's Office: Matt O'Keefe, Assistant State Attorney Dan McCarthy, John Gory, Bernie De la Rionda, State Attorney Angela Corey, Mark Caliel and Mark Borello.



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Raul and May Martinez



Deryl Adkison



Judith Chapple



Sarah Mills



Father Peter Church

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