

Bios for MVFHR Board of Directors

Bill Jenkins

William Jenkins was on his second day of work at a fast-food restaurant when the Richmond, Va., establishment was robbed at closing time. While cooperating fully with the robber, William, 16, was shot and died instantly. His father, Bill Jenkins, quickly found that there were virtually no readily available resources to answer his questions as a survivor of a traumatic loss.

Bill found some help scattered in bookstores, on the Internet, and in support groups and agencies. But there was no single, practical and useful resource written by victims for victims containing the advice and guidance that he and his family needed following their loss.

Using the information he had collected he wrote *What to do When the Police Leave: A Guide to the First Days of Traumatic Loss*, which has quickly become an important resource for families dealing with the sudden or traumatic death of a loved one. Bill gives workshops on various victims' issues for the National Organization for Victim Assistance; the Compassionate Friends; Fight Crime: Invest in Kids; and Parents of Murdered Children. He serves on the Cook County Juvenile Probation Department's Victim Advisory board and is also an instructor with the Virginia Institute of Forensic Science and Medicine training officials who work with victims of crime. His goal is to help reduce crime by providing hope and resources at the critical stages of life for those who so desperately need them.

In contrast, the death penalty "brings neither peace nor healing to the injured parties and the resulting upheaval and re-victimization at all levels of its implementation has far graver consequences than are ever brought to light," he says.

Bill believes that as a society we are at a point "where a decision must be made. Do we perpetuate a system of punishment that is of questionable social value and can never be perfected, or do we remove its traumatizing impact from our criminal justice system altogether? The answer will in large measure define who we are as a people." He has joined MVFHR because its dual focus on victims and human rights is "uniquely suited to answering this question." A professional artist and educator at the college level for more than 15 years, Bill teaches and designs for the theatre program at Dominican University near Chicago.