

Bios for MVFHR Board of Directors

Bud Welch

On April 19, 1995, Bud Welch's 23-year old daughter, Julie, and 167 others were killed in the bomb blast that destroyed the Alfred P. Murrah building in Oklahoma City. Bud had always opposed the death penalty but Julie's death prompted bouts of anger, pain, hatred and revenge. He longed to see Timothy McVeigh (who was eventually tried and convicted of the bombing and executed) dead.

After months of agony Bud began to question his desire for revenge. He realized that nothing positive would arise from McVeigh's execution. "It was hatred and revenge that made me want to see him dead and those two things were the very reason that Julie and 167 others were dead," he says. He also remembered Julie's comments that executions were only "teaching children to hate."

Bud spent the next several years speaking out against the death penalty in general and McVeigh's execution in particular. He met Bill McVeigh, Tim's father, and the two formed a friendship that is being documented in an upcoming film.

As an ardent abolitionist he has addressed the Russian Duma, the British and the European Parliaments, and universities and groups across Europe. He has testified twice before the U.S. House Judiciary Committee, once in opposition to the habeas corpus reforms that were being proposed and later passed as part of the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act.

He has testified before 22 state legislative bodies including the Illinois house judiciary committee on that state's death penalty moratorium bill. His speeches at scores of universities and law schools center on his hard-won stance against the death penalty. He is a board member of the National Coalition Against the Death Penalty. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma City National Memorial Foundation and met with President Clinton at the White House to present the plans for the national memorial.

He has been interviewed with Larry King and Bill Moyers and appeared on "Good Morning America," the "Today Show," CBS's "60 Minutes" and "Dateline NBC." He has written pieces for both Time and Newsweek. Profiles of Bud have appeared in numerous magazines including Guideposts and Parade.

Bud received the "Abolitionist of the Year" award from the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty.

He also received of the "Abolitionist of the Year Award" in 1998 from the Oklahoma Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty; the "Felton Humanitarian Award" from Death Penalty Focus; the "Spirit of Compassion" award of the Prison Action Committee in Buffalo, New York; and the ACLU Oklahoma Foundation "Anti-Death penalty/Prison Project Award." He is also the recipient of the "2003 Reconciliation Award" from California People of Faith Working Against the Death Penalty; the "Frederick Douglass Equal Justice Award" from the Southern Center for Human Rights in 2001; the "2001 Abolitionist of the Year Award" from Coloradans Against the Death Penalty; the "Golden K" of the Kiwanis Club in Decatur, IL in 2002; and he was presented with the Key to the City of Buffalo, NY in 1998 by Mayor Anthony Masiello. He has participated in the "Journey of Hope" and many other anti-death penalty activities and organizations.