

Domestic Deaths in Minnesota

In Minnesota in 2009 **at least 12 women** were murdered in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was a current or former husband, boyfriend, or intimate partner. **At least 10 children under the age of 18** were murdered in cases where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was the father, mother, or guardian or household/family member of the child, or the perpetrator was the spouse or intimate partner. **At least 2 friends, family members or interveners** were murdered in domestic violence-related situations. **At least 1 man** was murdered in a case where the suspected, alleged, or convicted perpetrator was a current or former intimate partner. **At least 8 children** were left motherless due to their mothers' domestic violence murders. **At least 3 additional women** were murdered by a family member or an intimate partner of a family member.

Stories from the 2009 Minnesota Femicide Report:

On June 21, 2009 at 1:00 a.m. Chad Gulbertson went to the home of Jody lee Morrow 38, of Albert Lea MN. In violation of an order for protection that Jody had obtained on June 1st. He killed her by hitting her in the head with a ball peen hammer. Legal documents show that he had physically abused and threatened to kill her in the past. Gulbertson turned himself in to the police later that morning. The police found Jody lying on the floor in front of her wheelchair. The floor and the wheelchair were covered in blood. Gulbertson has been charged with one count of second-degree murder while under a restraining order for protection and one count of third-degree murder. Jody is survived by her two sons, ages 10 and 12.

On February 24, 2009 Dale M. Nyren shot and killed his wife, Sharon Kathleen Nyren 67 of Fairhaven Township MN in their home with a .22 caliber revolver. Dale admitted having an argument with Sharon, that he first shot her in the knee and then a few minutes later, he shot her in the head. Dale is charged with second degree murder. Dale Nyren pled guilty to murder charges in August. Sharon is survived by three sons, five grandchildren, a great grandchild, and siblings.

Alexander Heikes killed his infant son Alexander Heikes 7 weeks old. Formerly of Minneapolis MN. Alexander killed his infant son by squeezing his abdomen so hard that the infant's liver and spleen were lacerated and bled into his abdominal cavity. When Heikes woke up several hours later with the baby laying on his chest, the baby was dead. The medical authorities also identified a dozen healing rib fractures from earlier abuse. Heikes has been charged with unintentional second-degree homicide. Baby Alexander is survived by his mother.

It is impossible to predict with certainty which batterers will become lethal to their victims. All batterers should be viewed as potentially deadly, though there are well documented indicators of lethality of which everyone should be aware. Included in the factors that have been identified as possible lethality indicators are: separation, extended history of domestic violence or other violence, pregnancy, threats or fantasies of homicide or suicide, access to a firearm, threats to use a weapon, stalking, attempted strangulation, forced sex, extreme jealousy and control of daily activities.

Domestic violence and domestic homicide have a devastating effect on every person living in Minnesota. Each of the victims that died in these assaults was someone's daughter, son, mother, father, sister, brother, family member, intimate partner, friend, neighbor, or co-worker. An abusive relationship that ends in the murder of the victim illustrates the failure of our system and society to respond to the needs of battered women and abused children. Help protect the people you love. For more information on domestic violence and how to get help call the DOVE Program at 1.877.830.3683(DOVE).

For more information on the Minnesota Femicide Report visit www.mcbw.org.
Information obtained by: Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women
Minnesota 2009 Femicide Report