

Academy Forum

Continuing the Message of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue #33- January 2014

Just a Thought

On April 4, 2013, Maryland and the nation lost one of the greatest victim advocates, Vince Roper. Roberta, his beloved wife and partner of 55 years, shares some thoughts about his legacy.

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Web Links

You never know what resources await you on the world-wide web ...come see what our latest surfing expedition uncovered

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Save the Date!

Find out what trainings and events are just around the corner. It looks like there are lots of ways to keep you busy this spring!

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Alumni Updates

Always find yourself thinking, "I wonder what happened to..." Check out what your fellow Alumni are up to!



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Best Practices

Mahatma Ghandi wisely noted "In a gentle way, you can shake the world." This in many ways captures the essence of who Vince Roper was. Keith Gethers memorializes this quiet leader in a heartfelt essay on behalf of the RVAAM family

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The 20/20

Each newsletter get an inside look at one of the RVAAM peers - 20 questions, 20 unique answers

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Just a thought...

In Memoriam - Vincent William Roper

On April 4, 2013, our beloved Vince suffered a heart attack and died in his sleep at our home in Upper Marlboro, MD. Just the day before, Vince and I had received a proclamation from the Maryland Governor on the occasion of the first annual Crime Victim and Advocate Day.

As the one year anniversary of his passing draws near, I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you a little insight into who Vince was as a man, a husband, a father, and a tireless advocate for the



countless crime victims and their families across Maryland.

Vince had a more than 30 year career in the Navy having entered it when he was just 17 years old. He grew up in Leighton, PA, and then went to the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, where he graduated in 1956 as member of the 16th Company and captain of the Academy's cross-country team. He spent most of his career in the Naval Weather Service with both shipboard and shore assignments. As a consequence, our family enjoyed many traveling adventures living both abroad and in numerous states across the United States. He retired from the service in 1984 and entered

into the private sector.

After the death of our beloved daughter Stephanie in 1982, Vince and I founded the Stephanie Roper Committee & Foundation, Inc. to advocate for greater rights and services for crime victims and their families so none of them would have to go through the same experiences our family did. Vince devoted countless

hours to the Foundation and the cause, and in 1994 he left private industry to devote his full time efforts as a volunteer advocate for crime victims' rights and services for our daughter Stephanie's Foundation and later the Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center. In fact, Vince continued to volunteer until the day he died, serving as the Treasurer of the MCVRC's Board of Directors.

Vince received many accolades for his perseverance for victims' rights, including Prince George's County Council's Tribute to Service award. But I think his legacy is best articulated by the words expressed by the U.S. Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus who noted, "Vince Roper dedicated his life to his daughter's legacy on the principle that one person can make a difference. In word and deed he was a hero and an inspiration to others. He worked with compassion and conviction to secure crime victim justice for all. His friends and colleagues in the national crime victims' rights movement remember, honor, and salute him."

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Greetings Alumni!

It has been one crazy winter so far, and I for one can only hope Spring shows up soon.

I have some pretty exciting news to share - the VSPN is revamping and getting back into the momentum, so please watch for updates for training, fundraisers, and upcoming activities. We have some very exciting things coming up in the near future, including a fundraiser for scholarship money for certification. So don't forget that you can apply for certification any time, and you can download the application at the RVAAM website at www.rvaam.org. Let's continue to build on the momentum we have established so far and continue to see more victim professionals pursue certification. In fact, let's make our State have the best Victim Service Professionals in the country!

With Spring right around the corner, now is the time to start recruiting for the upcoming Roper Victim Assistance Academy. The Academy will take place from June 2nd-6th at the Bon Secours Center in Marriottsville. Please encourage your colleagues to apply and share with them your experiences. I've always said the greatest marketing tool we have for the Academy is the word of our Alumni. So please spread the word! And for those of you who have never visited Bon Secours, please take the time to join us during this year's Academy - it truly is a wonderful location and fosters an incredible learning environment. If you are interested in participating in this year's Academy in some capacity, please contact Linda Fair at lfair@ubalt.edu

Wishing you all the best ~ until next time...

Debbie Bradley, C.A., VASIII

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"Disciplining yourself to do what you know is right and important, although difficult, is the high road to pride, self-esteem, and personal satisfaction." - Margaret Thatcher



Web Links

Although we have a virtual library at our fingertips every time we turn on the computer, we often lose sight of the forest through the trees just trying to navigate the world-wide web. Here are a few sites that relate to this issue's "Just a Thought" ... happy surfing!

The Office for Victims of Crime's Tribute to Vince Roper - A True Champion for Victims Rights

Read the tribute our country's leading national organization for victims' rights posted on their site. http://www.ovc.gov/news/Vincent_Roper.html

U.S. Congress - Congressional Dedication to Vince Roper

Read Maryland Representative Steny Hoyer's dedication to Vince Roper at the start of the meeting of the 113th Congress on May 9, 2013, at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?r113:E09MY3-0017:/>

Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center's Tribute to Vince Roper

Read the tribute MCVRC posted to honor the contributions Vince made to the field of victims' rights, and honoring his life. <http://www.mdcrimewilliams.org/the-passing-of-vince-roper/>

Save the Date

The Effects of Trauma on the Family

March 6th, 2014, MedChi - The Maryland State Medical Society, Baltimore, MD

The Maryland Health Care Coalition Against Domestic

Violence will be hosting a half-day seminar on the impact of traumatic stress on families. Sue Brown, LCSW-C, a Community Child and Family Therapist from the House of Ruth will be the keynote speaker. This training is free and qualifies for 2 CEUs for social workers. To register, please go online to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/5NCVY93> or contact Betsy Lehmann at dvcoalition@medchi.org with questions.

From Victim to Survivor: Using Best Practices to Guide the Way

May 13, 2014, Double Tree by Hilton Hotel, Annapolis, MD

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence and the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault are hosting a joint one day conference focusing on cutting edge best practices for domestic violence and sexual assault advocates, law enforcement, therapists, health care professionals and others who work with or are interested in assisting those affected by domestic violence and sexual assault. Participants will be able to attend a plenary session as well as three additional sessions of their choice For more information, email info@mnadv.org or go to www.mnadv.org

2014 RVAAM Academy

June 2nd-6th, 2014, Bon Secours Spiritual Center, Marriottsville, MD

This year's Academy is right around the corner!! Mark these dates on your calendars and start recruiting!! Applications can be downloaded from the RVAAM website at www.rvaam.org or requested from Dr. Debra Stanley at dstanley@ubalt.edu



Alumni Updates



It seems like only yesterday when we were all together at the Academy. But in a blink of an eye another

year has passed us by. Here's just a snapshot of some of the special events and milestones our alums have experienced since we last met...

Look at Our Movers & Shakers!

Diane Charles (formerly Diane Wilkins, Class of 2007) - Diane recently completed her tax preparer classes and is now a certified IRS Professional Tax Preparer. Just in time for tax season! Way to go Diane!

Tina Shankle-McKnight (Class of 2005) - Tina celebrated her birthday on December 16th - although we are a bit late, we want to wish her a very happy birthday, and hope 2014 brings many happy memories!

Best Practices

Leading Quietly

Most of history's leaders have had in common the ability to suppress their own greatness, to subjugate themselves, and to quell their own egos in order to be of service to others. They knew when a cause was worth fighting for - even dying for - and joined in the fray even if they could have escaped any direct effects of the conflict. The greatest of these leaders' legacies were built on platforms of non-violent protests to injustice.

In response to the primitive and unfair practices of the 1980s court system that they faced during criminal proceedings related to the murder of their daughter,

Stephanie, Vince and Roberta Roper formed the Stephanie Roper Family Assistance Committee. In October 1982, the Ropers formally incorporated the committee as the Stephanie Roper Committee and Foundation. Without taking time to relish their short-term successes, the pair continuously refocused on the next goal in their strategic plan aimed at equality in the justice system. By 2002, because of their passion for assisting crime victims and their families, the Ropers replaced the previous committee and foundation with the Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc (MCVRC), "a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to serving the interests of crime victims in Maryland, while maintaining a nationwide reputation for dedicated advocacy and services."

Thousands of people recognize and acknowledge Vince and Roberta Roper's contributions to the field of victims' rights. Without knowing who they are, countless others will benefit because many of the laws and rights that they helped to usher in are fixtures in Maryland and several other states. Most notably, the duo was instrumental in the creation of laws that provide victims with rights to be informed and included in judicial proceedings; rights to be present for trials and parole hearings; and the right to provide victim impact statements.

During that time in their lives, the Ropers exhibited leadership in different ways. While Roberta's style was fearless and head-on, Vince's role seemed to be simply the quiet support of this wife's efforts. His influence was obviously vital to the success of MCVRC, but his leadership style was hard to label because it was largely silent but effective.

A graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, Vince served a full career in the United States Navy, and retired having attained the rank of Captain. During his formal education and military service, he would

have studied and experienced both leadership and *followership*, appreciating the importance of everyone's roles and responsibilities that came with them. Upon landing in a different sort of "trenches" following the death of his daughter in 1982, Vince did not don the "guns blazing" type of leadership role one would expect from a former military leader; that would be called *autocratic* leadership - domineering, uncontested authority from a person in an inherited position whose goal is simply to get things done in a certain way right now. Rather what Vince displayed, and the best practice here, is a theory touted as a *situational approach* to leadership. A situational leader identifies the most important tasks and priorities; assesses the readiness of his or her followers; then applies the most appropriate style in order to accomplish a goal.



A situational approach to leadership is a wonderful overlay for people in advocacy because it is open and non-restricting. It

makes allowances for people with varying issues and interests, for people to be different, and for a leader to be accepting and responsive. In situational leadership, initially the leader provides an outlay of support and direction, which gives way to less direction and more support before s/he can reduce even that support as the followers' ability to accept responsibility for tasks increases. Dispensing direction, coaching, supporting, and delegating in just the right doses depending upon the circumstances, Vince became one of the most influential crime victims' rights advocates in Maryland.

Quiet and unassuming, Vince had a unique ability to contribute positively to victim advocacy nationwide and to the MCVRC's Board of Directors in particular. His unselfish willingness to support,

inspire, advise, motivate, and permit others to develop was extraordinary. Two shining examples of his mentorship are the MCVRC's first-hire, attorney Russell Butler, who has since moved up to now serve as the agency's Executive Director; and Bridgette Harwood, another young attorney, who upon leaving MCVRC became the Co-Executive Director of the Network for Victim Recovery of DC.

Although in his later years he was not as swift of foot, Vince remained tirelessly committed to his family, friends, MCVRC, and to victims' rights advocacy. Key to his leadership was that he always served as an example - sometimes obviously as a leader, and at other times as a follower. Those who knew him can recall countless instances taking his place on the assembly line to stuff envelopes, moving furniture, making calls, or chauffeuring others to where they needed to go. He was amazingly a man who also knew many by their first names, and in between routine functions would find time to listen, advise, empower, and provide guidance. Most importantly, he always met friends, family members, employees, or crime victims where they were and helped them to grow from there.

The legacy of Vince Roper lies in the ability he had to suppress his own greatness, to subjugate himself, and to quell his own ego in order to guide and to be of assistance to others. To know that he should follow when he was well-suited to lead, and to know when to lead through quiet, compassionate example. These are the hallmarks of the situational leader, and these were the hallmarks of Vince Roper. His spirit affected the lives of all who encountered him, and will continue to resonate through all of the contributions that he left behind.

* Essay contributed by Keith Gethers

Just a Thought (Cont.)

Undoubtedly, Vince made a big difference in life and his legacy will live on to future generations. But it is the love we shared that will continue to carry me. Ours was a marriage of true and rare partnership that endured and overcame many challenges and shared many joys.

At the closing of Vince's funeral, our son Pete, honored his father by reading a piece from George Carlin that I think Vince would want all of us to take to heart:

"Remember to spend some time with your loved ones, because they are not going to be around forever.

Remember, say a kind word to someone who looks up to you in awe, because that little person soon will grow up and leave your side.

Remember to give a warm hug to the one next to you, because that is the only treasure you can give with your heart and it doesn't cost a cent.

Remember to say 'I love you' to your partner and your loved ones, but most of all mean it. A kiss and an embrace will mend hurt when it comes

from deep inside you.

Remember to hold hands and cherish the moment for someday that person will not be there again.

Give time to love, give time to speak. And give time to share the precious thoughts of your mind. And always remember, life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by those moments that take our breath away."

I want to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the many friends and colleagues who supported our family with their thoughts, prayers, and caring presence at Vince's funeral.

In Loving Memory~

Essay contributed by Roberta Roper

Vince is survived by his wife of almost 55 years, Roberta, four children, and seven grandchildren. One child, Stephanie, and two grandchildren preceded him in death. A Mass of Christian Burial was held on April 12, 2013, at their church, Most Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Upper Marlboro, MD, and was attended by hundreds of people whose lives Vince touched. Burial was in Resurrection Cemetery in Clinton, MD.

Memorial donations may be made to the Maryland Crime Victims Resource Center, Inc. or to the Stephanie Roper Scholarship Fund at Frostburg State University.



Leadership (by Spatula)

A leader is someone who inspires others to achieve;

Instilling belief in those who do not believe,

A sense of calm when all around there persists

The ear-splitting cry of the pessimist.

When the way is lost to fog or bramble

Not to blindly wander on or amble

But find a better route or with resolve,

To fight on through to reach the goal

And not to shoulder the burden in isolation

But recognize that their determination

Is shared by others, and clearly see;

That their strength lies not in I, but we

A leader is someone who inspires others to achieve;

Instilling belief in those who do not believe

Through future lean, through times austere

Their vision is, and remains, clear.



News From the Field

Everyone knows that the field of victim services is always evolving. The challenge is to find a way to keep on top of all the changes ... we're here to help!

- * **House Bill 803:** Increase funding for the Maryland Victims of Crime Fund; specifically increase criminal courts costs for victim services
- * **House Bill 355:** Make annual yearly funding for services to survivors of homicide available statewide
- * **Senate Bill 922:** Victim notification statutory changes to consider changes in technology implementation; specifically update the statutory scheme to allow victim notification to work with the impending Maryland Electronic Court initiative.
- * **House Bill 705:** Clarification of who can act on behalf of the victim when the victim (i.e., child/ disabled/ elderly) is unable and there are no family members to protect the interests of the victim; specifically to clarify that courts have the authority to designate representatives for victims and alerting the courts when there may be no one to protect the victim's interest.
- * **House Bill 31:** Right to be heard by victims of crime in cases not filed by information or indictment in the Circuit Court. If passed, revised law would provide that all victims would have the right to be heard if practicable.
- * **House Bill 614:** Legislation to increase the collection of restitution. The legislation would require that when an inmate is transferred from the custody of one entity to another (e.g., from State corrections to a local detention center), restitu-



tion and victim notification must be included in the transfer.



Certification News

Want to learn more about the certification process and learn how you can be a cut above the rest? Here's what you need to know!

There are three levels of certification in Maryland, each require a specific set of qualifications and are described in detail below:

- * **Level I (VASI)** - a) complete application packet; b) minimum of two years experience (paid or unpaid); c) 40 hours of training (RVAAM, NVAA, or other SVAA); d) multiple choice exam; e) \$50 application processing fee
- * **Level II (VASII)** - a) complete application packet; b) minimum of five years experience (paid or unpaid); c) 80 hours of training (40 hours RVAAM, NVAA, SVAA and 40 hours advanced training and/or University level coursework in victim services, including 3 hours of Victims Rights training and 3 hours of Ethics in Victim Services training); d) written essay / short answer exam; e) \$75 application processing fee.
- * **Level III (VASIII)** - a) complete application packet; b) minimum eleven years experience (paid or unpaid); c) 120 hours of training (40 hours RVAAM, NVAA, SVAA and 80 hours advanced training and/or University level coursework in victim services, including 3 hours of Victims Rights training and 3 hours of Ethics in Victim Services training); d) oral presentation on approved topic in Victim Assistance; e) \$100 application processing fee.

All application materials and study guides for the written exams are available online at www.rvaam.org (click on the

Certification tab at the top of the page). For more information, or if you have any questions, please contact Debbie Bradley at bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org or by phone at (410) 836-5490.



Congratulations on a New Partnership!

Faculty and staff of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy and School of Criminal Justice, University of Baltimore (UB) would like to welcome their new partners on campus. Staff from the Governor's Office of Crime, Control & Prevention, Victims Services Unit and the Maryland Crime Victim Resource Center (MCVRC) has relocated their offices in the School of Criminal Justice at UB. This collaboration creates a centralized synergistic partnership that will help to enhance and expand efforts to strengthen crime victim services in the Baltimore area and throughout the state of Maryland. Please help welcome Anne Litecky (class of 2004), State Victim Services Coordinator; Monique Mitchell (class of 2013), Maryland Victims' Of Crime Fund Program Assistant; Richard Hoffman, Esq. Victims' Rights Compliance Officer, Kim Gunishaw (class of 2012), MCVRC Victim Services Advocate, and Russell Butler, Esq. MCVRC Executive Director to their new home.



Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention

The 20 / 20

Each newsletter we pose twenty questions to one of our members to get an inside look at who they are ... this month get to know Rosaria Alston, Class of 2012

My favorite movie is ...
"Babe"

My childhood nickname was ...
Chayo

If I could go anywhere in the world for vacation, I'd go to..
Spain and Greece

When I was little, I wanted to be a (blank) when I grew up ...
A Mom

My two favorite colors are ...
Purple and Coral

The best piece of advice I've ever been given is ...
When I work with crime victims, I always share this piece of wisdom with them ... when making difficult decisions, consider this; We have two very important organs in our bodies, the heart and the brain. Through medical innovations, we can use a machine to pump our hearts and we can even replace our hearts if needed. On the other hand, we cannot replace or exist without our brains. So always listen your inner-most thoughts, go with your instinct, and listen to the first thought when you are faced with a difficult challenge. Although the heart may experience pain, it will heal. The brain is the stronger and most important organ.

Something I think I do well is ...
Listening

The animal that best represents my personality is ...
A Lioness. I am strong, relentless, and I will fight to the death to protect my children

My favorite treat is ...
Chips Ahoy chocolate chip cookies and DQ's Strawberry Cheesecake

The most challenging thing about my job is ...
The case load and being pulled in so many directions; and the politics

The thing I like best about my job is ...
I have an open invitation to help someone make changes in their lives

The last movie I went to see in the theater was...
"Wolf of Wall Street" - I'd recommend it!

If I could see anyone in concert, it would be ...
Lenny Kravitz and Pitbull

The qualities I appreciate most in others is...
Strength, loyalty, honesty, and intelligence

The qualities I dislike the most in others is ...
Deceit and lack of vision

My favorite thing to do to help unwind after a rough day is to ...
Exercise, take long walks, hang out with my girlfriends, and to laugh with my husband

An occupation I wouldn't mind working in would be ...
A pre-K teacher

An occupation I'm really glad I'm not working in is ...
A police dispatcher

My family includes furry friends ...
A Yorkshire Terrier, A Belgian Sheppard, and a Tiger cat. The cat runs the house.

One of my goals for 2014 is ...
Peace

What do you want to hear? Have any news to share?

Are you itching to learn more about a particular issue in the field of victim services? The Editorial Board is always looking for new topics to profile in the newsletter that would be beneficial for our Alums both personally and professionally. Please send any suggestions you might have about a topic to profile in one of our upcoming newsletters to Debbie Bradley at bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org ... We also are happy to share any information you have about job openings and professional trainings you might think your fellow Alums would benefit from!

Editorial Board

Debbie Bradley — Editor
Michelle Lee — Assistant Editor
Keith Gethers — Assistant Editor
Ashley Fundack — Assistant Editor
Heather Pfeifer — Managing Editor

Alumni Directory

The 2013 Alumni Directory, which includes the addition of the most recent Academy class members, is available for distribution. However, we still would like your help to keep the Alumni Directory up to date! If any of your personal and/or professional information changes, please contact Debbie Bradley via email at bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org or by phone at (410) 836-5490.

Watch for the next edition of the Academy Forum in April 2014