

An Invitation to Join ...
VOCAL
Victims of Crime and Leniency

Calhoun County Courthouse
Law Library
25 West 11th Street
Anniston, AL 36201
256-231-4527

Name _____

Agency or Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ County _____ Zip _____

Telephone (Days) _____

(Nights) _____

Victim's Name (Optional) _____

Relationship _____

Date of Crime _____

Place and Nature of Crime _____

**Serving Calhoun,
Cleburne and St. Clair**



District Attorney
Mt. Cheaha Vocal Chapter
25 West 11th Street
Law Library
Anniston, AL 36201
Phone: (256) 231-4527
Fax: (256) 231-1816

Mt. Cheaha VOCAL Chapter



**VICTIMS OF CRIME
AND LENIENCY**

About VOCAL

It began out of frustration. It began out of hope. They weren't the first crime victims, and they knew they wouldn't be the last. Therefore, they had to strive to make the system a little more gentle for the next.

"Somewhere along the way the system has lost track of the simple truth that it is supposed to be fair and protect those who obey the law while punishing those who break it. Somewhere along the way, the system began to serve lawyers, judges and defendants, treating the victim with institutionalized disinterest."

-Lois Haight Herrington, Chairman

President's Task Force

On Victims of Crime

(Final Report – Washington, D.C.

December 1982)

What is VOCAL?

VOCAL, Victims of Crime and Leniency, is a non-profit organization established for the purpose of improving the quality of justice for victims of crime. The organization was established as a result of concerned citizens finding the realization of the criminal justice system vastly different than the justice system they perceived was established to protect them. In 1982 a group of citizens began a grass roots effort to organize victims of crime into an organization that could provide victim's assistance.

Our pledge is to assist crime victims for as long as they need our services – whether that is immediately after a crime occurs, during the trial and/or years later when a criminal is considered for parole.

VOCAL provides a safety net for many victims throughout the state of Alabama, including family members of homicide victims, as well as those who have been robbed, rape, assaulted, or otherwise victimized.

Listed below are the services VOCAL rendered in 2009 alone:

- Assisted 575 Alabamians who were family members of homicide victims, including:
 - Provided ongoing counseling/therapy to 450 family members,
 - Offered crisis counseling and support to 155 family members,
 - Helped 11 families with funeral arrangements, and
 - Assisted 50 family members who filed for state crime victims compensation
- Conducted training for 180 police cadets throughout Alabama.
- Protested the early release of 120 murderers and accompanied families to these parole hearings.
- Assisted 24 families as they met with prosecutors.
- Provided crime-scene clean-up services for 11 homicides.
- Gave support to 255 family members at trials, sentencing and various court hearings.

Organization Activities

The activities of VOCAL are divided into three major areas. They are (1) Victim Assistance; (2) Victim Advocacy; and (3) Education and Public Awareness.

Providing assistance to victims is of enormous importance to the organization. Assistance may take the form of crisis intervention, or community resource referral or attendance at judicial proceedings, or support groups. Sometimes VOCAL can only provide a listening ear.

Advocacy for victims is geared toward eliminating some of the problems that victims face. These would include representation at parole proceedings, referral for legal assistance and legislation aimed at eliminating inequities to victims within the criminal justice system. VOCAL also provides a 24-hour toll-free telephone line in Alabama.

As our efforts continue to improve the plight of victims, we invite you to participate in one of the many avenues of opportunity that VOCAL has to provide. Your participation and commitment will assure victims of crime that there exist those to answer the call when a victim is heard to ask, "Who is On My Side?"