

PANEL: Panel assembled of community partners including ACWS and RESOLVE.  
Possibility of international partnership participation.

*Silent Witness*  
*Domestic Homicide Victims in Alberta*  
*Research Conducted from 2000-2004*

Word Count: 443

Number of Characters: 2,492

KEY PRESENTERS: *Patricia Poohachoff, Communications & Partnership Specialist from the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters and Ashley Barlow, Researcher from RESOLVE*

HISTORY: The Silent Witness Project was an initiative of a group of artists from Minnesota whom were upset about the growing number of women murdered by intimate partners. They created free-standing, red wooden silhouettes representing each woman killed because of domestic violence in the state. Each victim's story was written on plaques placed on the chest of their silhouette. The project was so effective, that today every state presents a Silent Witness Project, as well as several countries including Canada. The first Canadian Silent Witness Project began in New Brunswick, the second is here in Alberta, and other Provinces are gaining momentum.

ALBERTA PROJECT: The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS) began their Silent Witness Initiative in 2004. ACWS developed a specific criteria for victim representation which is as follows: *Women killed in Alberta by their partners, ex-partners or acquaintances in acts of family violence where the perpetrator was charged and convicted, or the women were killed in documented cases of domestic murder/suicide. Victims of triangulation will also be represented in this display (children, boyfriends, other family members).*

RESEARCH: In Alberta between January 1, 2000 and July 16, 2004, RESOLVE Alberta conducted research that concluded at least 38 people (women, children, and men) were murdered in domestic violence related homicides. They also concluded that many victims of domestic homicide have gone unaccounted for and that much more research on the victims and the context of each situation must be done.

PRESENTATION: This presentation will include a speaker from RESOLVE and from the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters. The session will include a powerful procession of wooden silhouettes representing a number of these victims and a brief description of their lives. The Silent Witness presentation brings attention to the human side of the disturbing statistics of domestic violence and homicide in Alberta. There is also the possibility of Alberta being joined by the New Brunswick Silent Witness Project, and even one of the International partners. We hope that conference organizers will also consider holding a candle lit vigil that includes the Silent Witnesses as part of their regular programming. We believe that adding this event will ensure that in spite of the need for more research and implementation of best practices, that together we do not let the victims of family violence become cold statistics or fade in our memories.