

## SPOTLIGHT

### Author recalls tale of son's murder

By Jeff Fuller

When a close family member dies unexpectedly, some may work on their personal grieving process through a variety of venues and when a local resident had to deal with the tragic loss of her son, she began to scribe her story.

Although her own personal tale of horror took nearly a decade to complete, Jan McQuaid has published "Security Breach: The Murder of Tod McQuaid," which gives a glimpse into a time of uncertainty, tragedy and determination that she has encountered.

The horrific turn in McQuaid's life began just 15 years ago when her son, Tod, went missing in West Virginia and eventually was found, murdered.

Although the book starts detailing the relationship that Tod had with his parents, children, ex-wife and friends, it soon takes a turn for the worse detailing his death and ultimately those who go on trial for his murder.

Although many parents dealing with the death with the loss of a child may find several ways to grieve and ultimately heal, for McQuaid it happened when a close friend suggested that she write down her story.

After taking a class with a local author and publisher, McQuaid set the first steps on her journey of writing to publication, something that she had not expected at the beginning.

"It was a healing process and I wrote this for therapy and my two granddaughters," said McQuaid.

"I have grown stronger through writing his book."

Now that her goal of finishing the book has come to completion, McQuaid is now working on improving victims' rights laws in West Virginia as well as at home.

Although it may be difficult for one person to make a difference, she is hoping that more become informed and that change can ultimately come to protect the victims rather than criminals.

Through speaking engagements that McQuaid and her husband regularly undertake, they work to tell their personal story to audiences of all types and try to educate them about what is lacking when it comes to victims' rights.

"Victims' rights are definitely something we need to fight for. We all need to band together to accomplish that goal," said McQuaid.

I understand what it's like to suffer, it really is a hell on earth. This book will give readers the exposure to understand the depths of the problem when it comes to victims' rights."

McQuaid's husband, Roger, on the other hand says that people usually wait until it's too late to do anything and many do not even know they are at risk.

"Everyone is a potential victim," said Roger McQuaid, Tod's father.

"We should never have to wait until something happens to take action."

Now looking back on the therapeutic benefits of writing, Jan McQuaid is hoping that her book will serve a variety of purposes to inform, educate and personally, to remind

her grandchildren, who are now in college, who their father was and what had ultimately caused his death.

Additionally, those who decide to read the 200-page non-fiction book will also have glimpse of what McQuaid and her family had to face when their beloved son was declared missing, found murdered and the long legal battle when dealing with those that caused his death. a legal battle that still has not come to an end.

“The efforts that need to be made go beyond this book,” said Roger McQuaid.

“I hope the readers can understand what victims’ rights are all about because they can be violated.”

The battle has not nearly come to an end as one of those involved in the murder received a reduced sentence after pleading guilty to first-degree murder in 2003.

McQuaid felt more like a victim of the judicial system when they were denied notice to attend the hearing and felt other victims’ rights were violated under the 1984 West Virginia Victims’ Rights Act.

Although at this point, some may feel there may be no hope to change the system, McQuaid and her husband are hoping for a U.S. Constitutional Amendment that will hold the states accountable for such discrepancies.

Through her book signings, McQuaid is working to support victims to gain some constitutional recognition.

The Victims’ Rights Amendment was introduced to the U.S. Congress by President Bill Clinton in 1996 and endorsed by President George W. Bush in 2002.

In the end, many that read the true-to-life page turner, will certainly envision the horror that parents face when losing a child, let alone when someone is murdered.

“ It was pure hell but we need to keep fighting for victims’ rights and even when looking at other families facing this problem, my heart goes out to them,” said McQuaid.

“Through writing to local politicians maybe change can finally be made.”

“Security Breach: The Murder of Tod McQuaid” is \$20 per copy, which includes an inscription from McQuaid.

Books can be ordered by sending a check or money order, name, phonenumber and address to: Jan McQuaid, PO Box 101112, Pittssburgh, PA 15237

For more information, visit [www.janmcquaid.com](http://www.janmcquaid.com).

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