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MERCED COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
CELEBRATES VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK

Marylene Riley, who lost both of her sons to violence in Merced County, will be the featured speaker at the Merced County District Attorney's annual Victims' Rights Week ceremony held at noon on Thursday, April 6, at the Courthouse Park.

According to District Attorney Larry D. Morse II, Riley's sons, Michael and Marlis, were killed 11 months apart; Michael on October 7, 2008 and Marlis on September 12, 2009. Following the loss of her sons, she started a scholarship fund through Merced College in their honor and has organized the annual Riley Brothers' Victims Remembrance walk for her sons and other families who have lost loved ones in the Loughborough area of Merced.

Victims' Rights Week will be celebrated April 2-8. This year's theme "Strength Resilience Justice," emphasizes building the capacity of individuals, service providers, and communities to respond to crime and support the ongoing healing of victims and survivors, Morse said.

"This ceremony is an important way to bring the families of crime victims together with law enforcement, victims' advocates and the community to let them know we share their losses," said Lisa DeSantis, Victim Witness Coordinator for the District Attorney's office. "We are always there for them."

DeSantis encourages participants to bring a photo of their loved one so it can be displayed on easels set up for the event. There will also be a time for participants to write a special message to their loved ones and tie it to a tree that was planted in remembrance of victims.

"We do it for the families and our community," said DeSantis "We want to make it a special and memorable week for them each year."

For more information on the Victims' Rights Week ceremony, please contact Lisa DeSantis at the District Attorney's Victim Witness Program at (209) 385-7385.