

Hate in Hillsboro

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"We suspect it may have been something like that," O'Connell said. "Are we absolutely certain at this point? No. But I think it's a pretty good determination based on all that we've learned up to this point."

On Sept. 4 the Washington County Sheriff's Office increased the reward to \$2,500 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the murder. A big missing piece in the investigation is that only a few acquaintances have come forward to give detectives an idea about Okaruru's behaviors, habits and hangouts.

"We're not getting the calls that we should be getting from her friends in the community," O'Connell said. "We need to talk to those people."

Causing further pain in the trans community is the mainstream media's insistence on referring to Okaruru as a cross-dressing man because she had not yet undergone sexual reassignment surgery. Lori Buckwalter, It's Time, Oregon! executive director, and Roey Thorpe, Basic Rights Oregon executive director, have been trying to sensitize the *Oregonian* to the issue with little success.

"Clearly, they're doing it intentionally, because we've brought it to their attention again and again and again," Buckwalter said. "Shouldn't they, as a responsible business owner, give her more respect than that?"

O'Connell admitted that he is not an expert but that investigators are trying their best to be careful. However, he hopes to focus people's attention on the investigation itself.

"It has never been our intention to offend anyone, and our interest is solving this case," he said. "If we're not perfect in the proper use of various terms, we apologize to the transgender community."

O'Connell said he has received several calls complaining about the use of incorrect pronouns. On the other end of the spectrum, he also was contacted by one man who exemplified the

kind of hateful attitudes that can lead to such crimes.

"Basically he said by the mere fact that we're investigating this murder we're legitimizing this perverted lifestyle," O'Connell said. "He was a crackpot."

In the meantime, Buckwalter hopes an upcoming candlelight vigil will enlighten people who aren't taking Okaruru's murder seriously.

"So long as the community doesn't say, 'We're not going to sit by and let this happen to each other,' we're sending a message of permission," she said. **J**

Detectives are asking that anyone with information that might assist with this investigation contact the WASHINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE at 503-846-2524.

REMEMBERING FRED

Eugene holds vigil for slain Colorado youth

by Susan Detro

At sunset on a clear, breezy evening Aug. 28 at Eugene's Amazon Community Center Amphitheater, more than 100 people participated in a vigil in memory of Fred C. Martinez Jr., a Two-Spirit Navajo youth whose body was discovered June 21 in Cortez, Colo.

The crowd was filled with adults, children and youth—gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans and straight. The Eugene chapter of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays and the Eugene Human Rights Commission also were on hand to provide information about their services.

Two memorial tables were set up during the vigil. One had flowers, candles and photographs of Martinez and his mother, Pauline; the other was covered with paper so participants could

write messages to the family.

Speakers included Marcy Middleton, Eugene Human Rights Commission chair; George Russell, Eugene School District superintendent; and Jana Schmeiding, University of Oregon Multicultural Center director. Michael Johnson of Lane Community College kicked off the vigil with Native American drumming.

Elise Self, Eugene PFLAG co-president, challenged the audience to carry forward the event's message into the wider community. She used the analogy of throwing a stone into water to create a ripple affect. Those present took a stone from the baskets passed through the audience and



A vigil was held in memory of Fred C. Martinez Jr. on Aug. 28 in Eugene

promised to remember Martinez and to affect others.

The vigil ended with Native American prayers by Louise Jackson and Wanda Long. After the formal event several participants spoke about their personal feelings.

About 20 similar vigils have occurred in California, Arizona, Colorado, Arkansas, Washington, Virginia, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, New Mexico and Florida. The events were held to

echo the words of Pauline Mitchell, who has spoken strongly in her commitment to "walk together on a path of truth and justice and never again allow our children and loved ones to suffer or walk alone." **J**

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