

9-23-2002

'Call for a Healthy Community' A Public Forum to Address Hate Crime

University of Dayton

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Recommended Citation

University of Dayton, "Call for a Healthy Community' A Public Forum to Address Hate Crime" (2002). *News Releases*. 9976.
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Sept. 23, 2002
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NEWS RELEASE

**'CALL FOR A HEALTHY COMMUNITY'
A PUBLIC FORUM TO ADDRESS HATE CRIME**

DAYTON, Ohio — When James Byrd Jr. was beaten, tied to a pickup truck and dragged to death by three men in Texas, it was motivated by racial hate. Byrd, a respected Jasper, Texas, community leader, was 49 and the father of three.

His sister, Mylinda Byrd Washington, will describe the family's experiences and talk about developing a multicultural educational center to improve race relations for "Call for a Healthy Community," a public forum sponsored by the Federation Against Intolerance and Racism (FAIR).

"Call for a Healthy Community" will begin with a reception at 5:30 p.m., followed by the forum at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 10, in the Dayton Convention Center, 22 E. Fifth St. The event is free and open to the public.

In addition to Washington, the slate of speakers will include moderator Judge Walter H. Rice, chief judge, U.S. District Court for the Southern district of Ohio; Arturo Bautista, founder and director of Migrants and Farm Workers Connection; Guy Jones, president of the Miami Valley Council for Native Americans; Gloria McCauley, director of the Buckeye Region Anti-Violence Organization; Nicholas Rathod, board member of the South Asian American Leaders of Tomorrow; and Stephen Wessler, director of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Hate Violence at the University of South Maine.

"In the aftermath of Sept. 11, there were a lot of hate incidents," said Ron Katsuyama, associate professor of psychology at the University of Dayton. As moderator of FAIR, Katsuyama has been a key organizer of the community forum. A "back to solidarity" resolution initiated last October by the Asian American Council won the support of Montgomery and Greene county officials as well as by many of the local communities, he said.

"But have things improved? There are still incidents for Muslims, Arabs and South Asians," he said.

The educational aspect of the forum, he hopes, will allow participants to gain an "awareness of the nature and scope of hate crimes and hate incidents, to gain a better appreciation of the diverse Miami Valley community and find out what positive responses the community can make when hate occurs."

FAIR is a coalition of Miami Valley agencies and organizations committed to combating hate crimes through public and professional education, support of victims and advocacy to support law enforcement in their efforts to document and fight bias-motivated violence.

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To arrange advance interviews with forum participants, contact **Ron Katsuyama** at (937) 294-8815 or via e-mail at rkatsuyama@voyager.net.