

Written by Kathy

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Pictured is convicted serial killer Anthony Sowell

From the Metro Desk of Cleveland Urban News. Com and The Cleveland Urban News.Com Blog, Ohio's Most Read Online Black Newspaper and Newspaper Blog, Ohio's leaders in Black digital news

(www.clevelandurbannews.com) / (www.kathywraycolemanonlinenewsblog.com)

(BRING SIGNS AND WEAR SHIRTS SYMBOLIZING YOUR ORGANIZATION TO THE RALLY AND VIGIL)

CLEVELAND, Ohio- The Imperial Women Coalition, The Laura Cowan Foundation, Sister to Sister, The Carl Stokes Brigade, The Oppressed People's Nation, Stop Targeting Ohio's Poor, The Greater Cleveland Committee for Community Empowerment and Educational Progress and other community activist groups, victims family members, Imperial Avenue residents, Black and other elected officials, and others will hold The Fifth Anniversary of the Imperial Avnuee Murders and Stop the Violence and Find the Missing Rally and Vigil in cooperation with National Domestic Violence month on Wednesday, Oct 29, 2014 at 4:00 pm on the corner of East 123rd St and Imperial Ave. (Editor's note: The meeting site is next to the since demolished

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home of serial killer Anthony Sowell. From downtown Cleveland take Kinsman Ave to East 123rd St, turn left, and proceed two blocks to Imperial Avenue with the home next to the corner. Call the Imperial Women Coalition at 216-659-0473 for more information).

THE THEME OF THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE IMPERIAL AVENUE MURDERS RALLY AND VIGIL IS "REMEMBERING THE IMPERIAL AVENUE WOMEN THROUGH UNITY AND SOLIDARITY AND BY CALLING FOR AN END TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND FOR ANTHONY SOWELL'S CONVICTIONS TO BE UPHELD BY THE OHIO SUPREME COURT AND OTHERWISE"

At the rally community activists will say whether as much has been done as possible through changes in public policy and best practices by law enforcement and other officials in Cleveland and greater Cleveland to protect women, Black women in particular, against unnecessary rape, murder and other violence.

A former marine who served 15 years in prison for attempted rape before the serial murders, Sowell, 55, was convicted in 2011 by a Cuyahoga County jury on 82 of 83 counts, including multiple counts of aggravated murder of the 11 women that he murdered at his since demolished home on Imperial Ave in Cleveland, Ohio, and the rape of three other Black women. The coward of a serial killer begged for his life before he was sentenced to death by county judge Dick Ambrose. He sits on death row while his convictions are on appeal before the Ohio Supreme Court and his lawyers are seeking either a new trial or that his convictions are overturned. They claim that their serial killer client was denied a fair trial, and are being supported by the American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio (Ohio ACLU).

Sowell's lawyers and the Ohio ACLU argue that Sowell's Sixth Amendment right to a public trial and the public's First Amendment right to attend the trial were violated when Judge Ambrose shut the public and the media out of voir dire, or the seating phase for the jury, and out of the suppression hearing, in spite of allegations of police misconduct. Case law, however, does not necessarily make access to a public trial absolute, particularly in some cases involving rape, juveniles, and those with security risks. But Sowell's attorneys and the ACLU say that Ambrose could have chosen a less restrictive means and did not follow other established criteria to shut out the press and the public.

Whether Sowell was prejudiced to the extent that his convictions and death sentence will be overturned or that a new trial will be ordered by the high court remains to be seen. Activists say

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it was harmless error, if any, particularly since Sowell admitted to the murders at trial, though only at the sentencing phase where he took the stand after not during so at trial.

Prosecutors argue that Sowell's appeal is essentially frivolous.

"A new trial would be a disgrace to the community," said community activist Mary Seawright.

"We are against a new trial and his convictions should be upheld," said community activist and domestic violence survivor Laura Cowan.

"If Anthony Sowell were in the bible days, they would nail him to the cross, " said community activist and rape victim Christine Wilson.

"He slept at sentencing, so let him sleep on when his convictions and his death sentenced are upheld," said community activist Ada Averyhart.

"We will be there to memorialize the women that Sowell was convicted by a jury of his peers of murdering, and to push for justice in this matter," said community activist Valerie Robinson.

"Our family will be there and they need to do more to find our mother's killer," said Angelique Malone, whose mother is among three women murdered near East 93rd Street and Bessemer Avenue on Cleveland's largely Black east side in 2013.

"We do not believe that there were any reversible errors at the trial court level that merit a new trial and that admitted serial killer Anthony Sowell had effective assistance of counsel, and we call for the Ohio Supreme Court to uphold his convictions and his death sentence," said community activist Kathy Wray Coleman. "If the issue is judicial wrongdoing or police misconduct relative to the murders and the trial then take the judge to the bar, seek criminal charges against the police, and call for an investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice, but by no means should the high court overturn his convictions or grant him a new trial."

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"This violence against women has got to stop," said community activist Dick Peery

Rally speakers to date include the following: Victims of crime, including their family members, including Angelique Malone and Imperial Avenue affiliates, CNN Hero and Domestic Violence Survivor and Advocate Laura Cowan, Cleveland Ward 6 Councilwoman and Women's Rights Advocate Mamie Mitchell, Cleveland Ward 4 Councilman Kenneth Johnson, State Representative Bill Patmon (D-10), retired Plain Dealer reporter Dick Peery, Underground Railroad Leader Dr. Eugene Jordan, Fairfax Business Association Member Mary Seawright, Peace In The Hood Leader Khalid Samad, Imperial Women Leader Kathy Wray Coleman, Oppressed People's Nation Chairman Ernest Smith , Stop Targeting Ohio's Poor Leaders Dr. Stuart Robinson and Valerie Robinson, The Rev Pamela Pinkney Butts, Black on Black Crime Founder Art McKoy, and Greater Cleveland Committee for Community Empowerment and Educational Progress Leaders Alethea Thomas and Erica Robinson.

Participating grassroots groups or group members and other organizations include The Imperial Women, The Laura Cowan Foundation, Cleveland Urban News.Com, Black on Black Crime Inc., Sister to Sister, Stop Targeting Ohio's Poor, The Fairfax Business Association, Peace In The Hood, The Cleveland African American Museum, The Oppressed People's Nation, The Family Connection Center, The October 22nd Coalition Against Police Brutality, Cleveland City Council Members, Black members of the Ohio State Legislature, The Carl Stokes Brigade, The Underground Railroad, The Cleveland Black Contractors Group, and The Greater Cleveland Committee for Community Empowerment and Educational Progress.