

**U.S DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS
OFFICE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME**

2009 National Crime Victims' Rights Week Award Winners

Ronald Wilson Reagan Public Policy Award

WILLIAM VAN REGENMORTER
Hudsonville, MI

William Van Regenmorter, a retired state legislator, is considered by many to be the "Father of Victims' Rights" in the state of Michigan. Senator Van Regenmorter authored the Michigan Victims Bill of Rights Constitutional Amendment, which became law in 1988, as well as successive victim-related legislation. He has had a major influence over the development of victims' rights policy across the country, with the Michigan Victims Bill of Rights serving as the model for drafting Arizona's law that, in turn, served as the model for many other states' amendments. He also set up a monitoring system throughout Michigan to make sure that the laws he authored were implemented and respected.

Senator Van Regenmorter has a 24-year legislative career in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. He authored Michigan's first crime victim rights act, which was later named in his honor. In 1997, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) established the William Van Regenmorter Award to be given to individuals and organizations who "exhibit outstanding leadership in the service of victims of crime." He was also named Michigan's Legislator of the Year 11 times and the National Center for Victims of Crime named him National Legislator of the Year. Some of the key issues Senator Van Regenmorter has had an impact on are domestic violence, home invasion, faster resolution of child abuse cases, truth in sentencing, DNA profiling, and public services for persons with disabilities.

Senator Van Regenmorter is the founder of the Michigan Crime Victim Foundation, which serves as a financial resource of last resort for victims who lack insurance or do not qualify for victim compensation. A stronger sense of victim empowerment has emerged as a result of his mission to ensure that all victims are afforded their much-deserved rights. William Van Regenmorter was nominated by Steve Derene, Board Member, National Victims' Constitutional Amendment Network, Madison, Wisconsin, and received a letter of support from Michigan's Governor, Jennifer M. Granholm.

David Beatty, former Executive Director for the National Center for Victims of Crime in Washington DC, has stated that "William Van Regenmorter has done more to advance the cause of victims' rights in the United States than any other state legislator. From my point of view, his career as a statesman and champion of victims' rights can best be described by one simple statement—he brought criminals to justice and justice to criminals."