

Community input sought on impact of 1987 murder

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Editor

In 1987, a Wheatland family faced tragedy when a father and husband was murdered.

According to newspaper articles in the Platte County Record-Times, James "Jim" Shelton, who had been a Wheatland resident since 1974, was murdered by Haze Arin, Jr. of San Antonio, Texas, when Shelton happened upon a robbery in progress at his office in San Antonio.

Jim had worked in building construction and owned a plumbing business, serving Wheatland and surrounding communities from 1974 until 1983. When construction slowed in southeast Wyoming, he moved to San Antonio where he worked for Harper International and at the time of his death was vice-president of Harper International and was in charge of manufacturing and field operations for the company's subsidiary, Refrigeration Engineering Corp. His wife Linda and their daughter continued to live in Wheatland, and he came home every few weeks, and on breaks to be with his family.

The plan was for Linda to continue working as a kindergarten teacher at West Elementary, and his daughter, Heather, to finish high school (she was a 16-year-old junior at the time) before

they moved to Texas to join him. The Sheltons also had a son, Troy, who had already graduated.

This plan stopped short in March 1987 when Jim was kidnapped, murdered and left for dead by his captors, including Arin, who was convicted of his murder in December 1987.

At that time, Arin was given a life sentence.

The family was recently contacted by the victim services division of the Bexar County District Attorney's office in Texas, letting them know that Arin's case was coming before the parole board for consideration of parole, after 20 years in prison.

"We want to give people (who knew my dad, and my mom) the opportunity to be able to express their views on our behalf...to not allow Haze to be out of prison," Heather Gould, Jim's daughter said. She explained the family is looking for friends and colleagues of Jim or Linda to share with the parole board their observations on how the murder has affected the family and the community.

"Wheatland is a small community and [we would] like to send the message that that kind



Jim Shelton

of behavior (as shown by Arin, Jr.) will not be tolerated in Wyoming...We do not want a murder in Wyoming, anywhere," Gould said.

Ann Koenig of Wheatland is helping the Shelton family and has volunteered to be a point for people to send letters to the parole board.

Koenig explained that the parole board responded to an email letter sent by one of her colleagues, saying they would accept email protests, and

recommended that letters from the community be gathered and sent in one batch to the parole board.

Time is of the essence. The parole board will be within the next week or two, she said. "They haven't given a specific date yet."

Letters must be signed, include an address and phone number, and must appear in a specific format to be accepted by the Parole Board. (See the ad on page A-4 for more details on the format).

Send letters in care of Ann Koenig at West Elementary, 201 20th Street, Wheatland, WY 82201.