

THE SACRAMENTO BEE

Sacramento vigil remembers victims of gun violence

By Hudson Sangree

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As the nation marked the one-year anniversary of a mass shooting in Tucson, Ariz., about four dozen people gathered on the steps of a midtown Sacramento church to remember victims of gun violence.

They lit candles and recited the victims' names while a bell tolled.

Among those assembled at St. John's Lutheran Church were Nick and Amanda Wilcox of Penn Valley. Their daughter, Laura Wilcox, was killed Jan. 10, 2001, by Scott Thorpe, a mental patient who went on a shooting rampage at the Nevada County Behavioral Health Department, where Laura Wilcox, a college student, was filling in as a receptionist.

The couple now work with the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. Amanda Wilcox is president of the group's Sacramento chapter.

"Today we are sending the message that enough is enough," she told the small crowd. "It is time to stop the carnage."

Assemblyman Roger Dickinson, D-Sacramento, recalled three mass shootings in the past year

– at a quarry in Cupertino, a hair salon in Seal Beach and a Southern California Edison facility in Irwindale. The shootings killed 16 and wounded 12. He called the shootings part of "an appalling epidemic of gun violence in America."

Rep. Doris Matsui, D-Sacramento, talked about the day, one year earlier, when a gunman killed six people and wounded 13, including Matsui's colleague Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, during a constituent event at a Tucson grocery store.

"We need to understand that this type of violence does not need to happen," Matsui.

The names of about two dozen victims were read aloud as a bell tolled. Then those who attended the event took candles and walked, two by two, to the corner of 15th and L streets, at Capitol Park, where drivers honked their horns in support.

The Brady Campaign estimates that about 100,000 people are shot in the United States each year, including about 31,500 who are killed.

"God bless the survivors," said state Sen. Darrell Steinberg, D-Sacramento. "May they heal and may we all build a better community."