



*For more information:*

Courtney Cox, PR Counsel

Maura's Voice

(850) 559-0708 or CourtneyC@TheMooreAgency.com

**For Immediate Release:**

**Maura's Voice Founded to Break Down Barriers & Address Violence**

*Foundation honors spirit of Maura Binkley, victim of Tallahassee yoga studio shooting*

**Tallahassee, FL (March 4, 2019)** – On what would have been Maura's 22nd birthday, policymakers, leadership from Florida State University, the Tallahassee community, and friends and family of Maura Binkley joined on the steps of the Florida Historic Old Capitol to celebrate the launch of Maura's Voice, an organization dedicated to research designed to break down barriers and address violence in our culture to shape a future where everyone can feel, and truly be, safe.

On November 2, 2018, a man walked into a yoga studio in Tallahassee, Florida and opened fire. He injured five and killed two women including Maura Binkley.

"Maura aspired to be a diplomat, putting her passion for listening to all sides, learning from all perspectives, and advocating on behalf of the greater good," said Jeff Binkley, Maura's father and the founder of Maura's Voice. "She will remain a change agent and her belief in a better world will live through Maura's Voice. We will work using best practice research to influence policy and create positive cultural change – to create a world where violence and hatred do not meet."

Maura's Voice will partner with researchers from Florida State University under the direction of Dr. James Clark, Dean of the College of Social Work, to discover what lives at the intersection of hate and violence.

"So often we equate violence with mental illness, but this is simply not the case," said Dr. Clark. "That way of understanding is an old paradigm that we often see used in public policy discussions. We must step back and look at violence as a complex phenomenon and begin to ask new, unanswered, and often unfunded questions to find innovative solutions to address the issue of violence in our culture. Maura's Voice will provide our team of global researchers the resources to explore these novel questions."

Florida State University will utilize a multi-disciplinary approach to engage researchers from the university, as well as colleagues throughout the world, applying innovative practices to develop a long-

term scientific agenda that will inform more effective practices on the ground and advance pragmatic policy reforms.

“Maura’s greatest wish was for all of the violence to stop,” said Florida State University President John Thrasher. “Now, it is up to us to help the Binkley family ensure that Maura’s voice — a voice for peace, love and kindness — will carry on. She wanted to make a difference in the world, and now her legacy has the potential to save lives.”

Maura’s Voice will provide policymakers and thought leaders with fact-based information on the underlying issues of systemic violence in the hopes of uncovering workable solutions to a better future.

“Too often policymakers make reactionary decisions without science-based research,” said Senator Bill Montford. “Yet, we cannot rely solely on research. Maura’s Voice will work to fill a gap where research will drive the policy decisions made by policymakers utilizing a deep understanding of their constituents. This collaboration will produce some of the most beneficial and effective policies as we find solutions to end violence in our culture.”

Additional gatherings took place in Atlanta and San Francisco to celebrate Maura’s core values and the launch of Maura’s Voice. Learn more about Maura’s Voice at [www.MaurasVoice.org](http://www.MaurasVoice.org).

###

### **About Maura’s Voice**

Maura’s Voice was founded as a voice for Maura and victims of every act of mass violence that has befallen this country. We are a foundation for research, created to better understand the interconnective relationship of mental illness, hate, and violence, and their impacts on the public safety of our nation.

Our intent is to provide policymakers and thought leaders with fact-based information on the underlying issues of systemic violence in the hopes of uncovering workable solutions to a better future. Learn more at [Maura’s Voice](http://Maura’s Voice).