

Written by Kathy

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CLEVELANDURBANNEWS.COM , CLEVELAND, Ohio-Keynotes speakers for an anniversary rally and vigil scheduled for 1 pm on Sat, Oct 29, 2022 on Imperial Avenue in Cleveland's Mt. Pleasant neighborhood where the home of the late serial killer Anthony Sowell (pictured) once stood have been announced by Cleveland activists and the Imperial Women Coalition, a coalition of activists founded around the murders of 11 Black women by the late serial killer on Imperial Avenue on the city's largely Black east side. For more information call Cleveland activist and organizer Kathy Wray Coleman at the Imperial Women Coalition at (216) 659-0473 and Black on Black Crime President and Organizer Alfred Porter Jr. at (216) 804-7462.

Specifically, those keynote speakers are Cleveland activists Angelique Malone and Ilyese Walwyn, state Sen Nickie Antonio, Cleveland Councilman Kevin Conwell, and Melissa Graves, CEO of the Journey Center for Safety and Healing in Cleveland (previously the domestic violence and child advocacy center) Malone's mother, Christine Malone, was one of some five Black women murdered in Cleveland along E 93rdSt and Dorthony Walwyn is amember of the Black Women'a Army in Cleveland, a grassroots advocacy group for Black women, particularly missing and murdred Black women

A memorial monument on the Imperial Avenue site has since been erected in memory of the 11 Black murdered women. The specific address of the anniversary event is 12205 Imperial Avenue in Cleveland.

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Oct 29, 2022 marks the 13-year anniversary of the day of the discovery by police and other authorities of the lifeless bodies of 11 Black women, who were strangled and murdered by Cleveland serial killer Sowell at his since demolished home on Imperial Ave on the city's largely Black east side. Dubbed the "Cleveland Strangler" Sowell died in prison of a terminal illness in February of 2021 while on death row.

Since the Imperial Avenue murders, and in the last two years, murders of Black Cleveland women in the city have increased by 50 percent, studies show, and Cleveland is one of the worst places to live in the country for Black women, a Pittsburgh study reveals. But in spite of this alarming data nothing significantly has been done by policy makers of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, or the state of Ohio, or federally to curb this heightened violence against Black women.

At the rally activist groups will call out the names of Black and other women raped and murdered in Cleveland, some of the cases still unsolved and the murderers still at large. They will also acknowledge that October is breast cancer month and domestic violence month.

In addition to the Imperial Women Coalition, Black on Black Crime Inc and Peace in the Hood, other participating groups for the upcoming anniversary rally and vigil on Imperial Ave on Oct 29, 2022, at 1pm include Cleveland Peacemakers, Greater Cleveland Immigrant Support Network, the Black Man's Army of Cleveland, the Black Women's Army of Cleveland, the Brickhouse Wellness Center, International Women's Day March Cleveland, Find Our Children

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The Missing-Ebony Alert, Survivors and Victims of Tragedy, the Laura Cowan Foundation, Refusefacism Ohio, Carl Stokes Brigade, and members of the Coalition to Stop the Inhumanities in the Cuyahoga County Jail.

Dead at the hands of serial killer Sowell are Tishana Culver, Leshanda Long, Michelle Mason, Tonia Carmichael, Nancy Cobbs, Amelda Hunter, Telacia Fortson, Janice Webb, Kim Yvette Smith, and Diane Turner.

Sowell, who died at 61-years-old, was convicted in 2011 by a Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas jury on 82 of 83 counts, including 11 counts of aggravated murder of 11 Black women and three counts of rape of the Black women who survived his wrath. Common Pleas Judge Dick Ambrose, the since retired trial court judge who presided over his criminal case and a former Cleveland Browns football player, handed the serial killer a death sentence per the recommendation of the jury that convicted him on all but one of the 83 charges leveled against him.

Six of the 11 Black murdered women were killed by Sowell after Cleveland police released him from custody in 2008 on a rape complaint, the serial killer arrested again in 2009 on another rape complaint that stuck, but only after he murdered six more women. Police also ignored missing persons reports filed by family members of the victims, allegedly because the victims were poor Black women.

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Sowell and his lawyers exhausted all appeals that sought to overturn his convictions and death sentence, including to the U.S. Supreme court, which refused to hear his case in 2017. The city settled with the families of the six women murdered after Sowell was erroneously released from custody in 2008 in spite of a pending rape complaint with police for \$1 million, which was split between the six families. Five other families that sued await settlement.

A former U.S. marine, Sowell served 15 years in prison for attempted rape prior to the Imperial Avenue Murders.