

[Click here to go back to search results.](#)

[Click here for a printer friendly version of this article.](#)

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids-Iowa City)

December 24, 1996

Section: B

Edition: Final

Page: 1

Seeking answers

7 friends of Iowa Citian, who died suspiciously, hold vigil

Gazette Johnson County Bureau

IOWA CITY - Seven friends of Laura Van Wyhe held a candlelight vigil Monday afternoon to call attention to Van Wyhe's suspicious death in northeast Missouri in October. "Hopefully, we're also praying that those responsible for her death will have the courage to step forward and let the truth be known," said Kristine Schipper of Iowa City.

"We want everyone to know that we're still thinking about Laura."

Van Wyhe, 21, died Oct. 26, a few hours after she was found lying alongside Highway 136 in northeast Missouri. Investigators said they were treating her death as a homicide.

A coroner's jury in Quincy, Ill., where Van Wyhe died, said her death was not accidental. She died of brain trauma, massive blood loss and "blunt force trauma" to the head and legs, the six-person jury concluded.

Schipper said Van Wyhe's friends also were hoping Monday that her family in Iowa City will get custody of her 1-year-old son, Samson Knight. A closed hearing to determine custody of the boy was held earlier this month in Johnson County District Court.

Van Wyhe's mother, LEEANNE THOMAS of 1026 E. Washington St., is challenging Donald Knight, the boy's father and Van Wyhe's former boyfriend, for custody. Knight now lives in Bonaparte.

Illustration: COLOR PHOTO

PHOTO

Buzz Orr

Kristine Schipper of Iowa City participates in a candlelight vigil on Monday afternoon outside the Johnson County Courthouse in Iowa City to bring attention to the suspicious death of Laura Van Wyhe. Seven people took part in the hourlong event.

Laura Van Wyhe Died on Oct. 26