

Friends Create musical event to raise money for victim's son 5 locally based musicians to be featured at Mill

Iowa City Press-Citizen

By Steve Smith

Saturday, December 7, 1996

Page 23

Laura Van Wyhe of Iowa City, pictured with her son, Samson, was found dead near a Missouri highway in October. A musical benefit Monday featuring five local bands will raise money for her family.

Local musicians will donate their time to a worthwhile cause Monday and hope their generosity catches on. Five Iowa City-area bands will perform at a benefit for the family of Laura Van Wyhe, whose suspicious October death on a stretch of Missouri highway has yet to be solved.

Van Wyhe, 21, was found by a truck driver early Oct. 26 on U.S. Highway 136 less than a half-mile west of Kahoka, Mo. She was the mother of a 15-month-old son, Samson, for whom the benefit is directed. It begins at 7 p.m. Monday at The Mill Restaurant, 120 E. Burlington St.

Artists who have offered their services are adult alternative musicians Greg Brown, Dave Moore and Susan Shore, acoustic band Big' Wooden Radio ': and the ethnic-dance group Kahraman Near East Dance Ensemble.

Organizers ask for a minimum \$10 donation. Josie Dunnington, Van Wyhe's best friend in high school, helped organize the event. She said it was originally intended to be a gathering of friends and family to talk, read poetry and share thoughts about Van Wyhe. But when more and more musicians began to toss their hats into the ring, the focus became more professional.

"We wanted a second chance to get everyone together, outside of a funeral setting, and just have a party celebrating Laura," Dunnington said. "Then, it took a turn and we decided to focus on fund-raising."

Josie's father, Benn Dunnington, said he wasn't surprised by the support the local musicians and businesses have given to make the event possible.

"Laura was a special person," he said. "She had a lot of friends. We want to be able to provide for (Samson's) needs," Benn Dunnington said. "This seemed like a good way to do it. "

What: Music benefit in memory of Laura Van Wyhe featuring Greg Brown, Dave Moore, Susan Shore, Big Wooden Radio and the Kahraman Near East Dance Ensemble

When: 7 p.m. Monday

Where: The Mill, 120 E. Burlington St.

Cost: A minimum of \$10 donation is requested