

January 26, 1998

Dear Colleague:

This year we commemorate National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) with the theme: **Victims' Rights: Right for America**. As communities and states across the land prepare for the 18th observance of NCVRW during the week of April 19-25, it is good to pause and reflect upon the simple and yet very profound truth expressed with this theme. In the decades since the victims' movement was launched, we have gained victory after victory -- some large and some very small -- and we have won these victories with the sweat and pain that comes with working for what *is right*. Today, crime victims are entitled to greater rights than ever before and our message is reaching throughout the country and, indeed, the world. Here in the United States, the fight for victims' rights has progressed to the very pinnacle of legal protection -- consideration of a federal constitutional amendment for victims of crime.

As we join together to honor victims and their advocates, let us remember and rekindle our belief in the rightness of our ongoing efforts to support and assist crime victims. While the pain of victimization and injustice continues to darken lives everywhere, there remains an unyielding beacon of hope that lights the way to fairness and justice. Each and every day, thousands of people all over this country fight for what *is right for America* -- comprehensive rights and services for innocent victims of crime -- and they show us, with their courage and perseverance, that the pathway to justice begins with each of us.

VALOR, the Victims' Assistance Legal Organization, Inc., is pleased to have the opportunity to produce the *1998 National Crime Victims' Rights Week Resource Guide* with the support of the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime. This *Resource Guide* contains a variety of materials that will assist you in planning your community and statewide activities to commemorate NCVRW. To produce this *Guide*, VALOR tapped the outstanding talents of consultants Christine Edmunds, Anne Seymour and Jann Taylor. For their assistance, we are very grateful.

Let us celebrate our victories, and in doing so, let us redouble our efforts to ensure just treatment for those who are victimized by crime. We commend you for your dedication and hard work and we are grateful for everything you do to light the way to justice for crime victims and for us all.

Sincerely,

Eric Smith
President

Morna A. Murray
Executive Director