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Elected officials gather at Northampton City Hall to denounce violence against women



District Attorney David Sullivan reads pledge to end violence against women with White Ribbon ambassador Stephen Jefferson sitting nearby. (Fred Contrada)

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NORTHAMPTON - Northampton might have a low murder rate, but officials gathered at city hall Friday to denounce the violence that is aimed at women and pledge to do better.

Much of the local political delegation, including Senate President [Stanley Rosenberg](#), state representatives [Peter Kocot](#) and Steve Kulik joined with Mayor David J. Narkewicz, Police Chief Russell P. Sienkeiwicz and several city councilors to take the White Ribbon Pledge to end violence against women. Narkewicz began to ceremony by proclaiming May 1 White Ribbon Day in Northampton.

The White Ribbon Campaign was established in 1989 after a gunman killed 14 female engineering students in Montreal, Canada. Locally, the District Attorney's Office has taken the lead in promoting an end to violence against women. Northwestern District Attorney David E. Sullivan read the pledge with University of Massachusetts Professor Stephen Jefferson, who has pushed the campaign in the UMass campus. Jefferson, who teaches sport management, focuses on domestic violence in sports.

Lost in the hype over the Floyd Mayweather-Manny Pacquiao upcoming boxing match, he said, is Mayweather's history of domestic violence. It took a video of football player Ray Rice to open the public's eyes about domestic violence in the NFL, he said.



Elected officials gathered on the steps of Northampton City Hall for White Ribbon Day. *Fred Contrada*

"The NFL wives has a secret organization against domestic violence," Jefferson said.

Yoko Kato, who also spoke at the event, knows domestic violence all too well. Her daughter, Sherry Morton, and Sherry's 18-

month-old son Cedric were brutally stabbed to death in Northampton 22 years ago. Sean Seabrooks, Morton's Cedric's father, was convicted of the murders and is serving a life sentence in prison.

Kocot invoked the killing of Jean Hosmer, who was shot to death by her husband in front of the Northampton police station in 1999 after renewing a restraining order against him. William Bernotas then shot himself in the head. He died several days later.



Mayor David J. Narkewicz was in the crowd that watched the White Ribbon ceremonies. *Fred Contrada*

"One in three women experience violence," Kocot said. "This community has an obligation to speak out against violence against women."