STATE OF ILLINOIS )
)
COUNTY OF WILL )

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, )
)
Vs. ) 07 CF 1926
Gilbert Knowles )

Defendant

**VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT**

Dear your Honor,

Gilbert Knowles has single handedly ruined several families lives by his actions on September 17, 2007. He has made every parents worst nightmare come true. I don't know how any human being could hurt a child and do the things that Gilbert did to my son, Devin. It takes a monster to harbor the hate that he has in his body. To commit a crime so brutal the defendant has to have no conscience, soul, or heart. He is a danger to everyone around him.

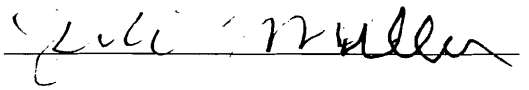
I still can't think of anything that a two year old could do to anger someone to inflict the injuries that he did. I believe that he committed this murder with other children in the home, and possibly in front of one of them. To this day my daughter can not hear her sister cry without having a breakdown. She cries, screams, and even hits herself in the head while screaming "I can't take this". Devin was her number one. She was really happy to have a younger brother. They did everything together. She even got him to wear a dress and makeup one time.

After Gilbert brutally beat Devin to death he placed his body next to the bed that he shared with his sister. The next morning Madilynn woke me saying that she couldn't find her brother. I pray to God that she didn't't see him! She had to witness the frightening 911 call, and then she had to have the news broken to her that her brother is no longer here. It is hard for a five year old

to comprehend that she will never be able to play, hold, touch or see her best-friend.

When Devin walked into a room it lit up. He was the sweetest, funniest, most wonderful son that a parent could ask for. That tragic night a part of my heart died with him. Everyday without him is a constant struggle. Because of Gilbert Knowles' actions that night I will never get to see my son's first day of school. I will never hear his sweet voice. I will never get to see him look at me with his innocent brown eyes. Aleena never got to know how wonderful her brother was and how much he adored her. His life was cut short by this monster's actions. Please for the safety of the human race never let him see the light of day.

Sincerely,



Julie Miller (Devin's mother)

STATE OF ILLINOIS )

)

COUNTY OF WILL )

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE TWELFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

WILL COUNTY, ILLINOIS

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**VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT**

Honorable Judge Richard Schoenstedt,

Five years ago I wrote these words in a book I gave my grandson, "My dearest Devin, It seems like just a little while ago you raised your tiny head and smiled at me for the first time and I smiled back with tears. I loved you so much then and I love you even more now. As you grow older, not only will you be my adored grandson, but you will be the joy of my life, Love Always, Nana Owens."

Those tears of joy are now tears of sorrow.

Three years ago my life and the lives of my family changed forever. My name is Pat Owens and I am Devin Owens' grandmother or his "Nana" as he used to call me. There are no adequate words to describe the pain, anger, and sorrow that we have felt since Devin's murder.

This senseless, almost unbearable, act took the peace, comfort, security, hopes and dreams from our family.

We will never understand the brutality of Devin's death. As a defenseless two-year old, he was undeserving of this evil act and his death has left a huge void in our family that can never be filled.

It has been horrible seeing the pain my son, Devin's father, has had to endure. I've seen him struggle with the depression and a grief so deep, I wondered if he would ever find joy again. I continue to see the struggle and marvel at the strength he has, just to make it through another day. He is enduring pain that no parent should ever have to bear.

Devin's sisters, Madilynn and Aleena don't understand why Devin was taken from them. They will never get the chance to know their brother. Will the memories of that horrific night ever awaken in Madilynn, and if so, how will it impact her life? Because of Gilbert Knowles, they have lost some of their innocence. They, along with my other grandchildren, are now painfully aware that violence and evil can come so close to them.

Our family gatherings have been greatly impacted. We continue to keep our traditions alive but we feel the void in our lives. There is an empty place where Devin once sat with his cousins. The silence where his laughter once rang out and the absence of the sound of his tiny feet running and playing. We have been robbed of all that the void is unbearably loud.

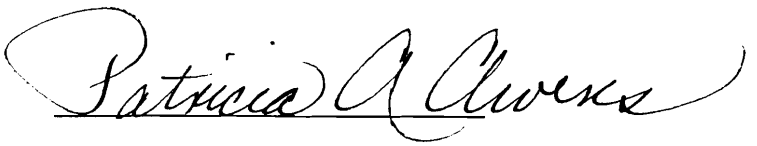
Because of the heinous act committed by Gilbert Knowles, we will never know where Devin's life would have led him. We will never know what contributions he would have made to society, never dance with him at his wedding or hold his first born child.

Our family is now having to deal with this loss and having to deal with seeking justice for Devin. But, we are not seeking revenge. Devin can never be brought back. We will always have this void in our lives and some of us may never wake from this nightmare.

Our family feels Gilbert Knowles should be given the maximum penalty under the law. He has shown no remorse for what he has done to Devin, to our family, to his former friend, my son. We are trying to forgive but forgiveness does not excuse anything. Gilbert Knowles must be held accountable. What he did to Devin was heinous and beyond comprehension. He has caused incredible pain to so many of us and we have suffered enough because of him. A sentence less than the maximum will only add more pain in the lives of our family. We are asking this for the sake of our family and for justice for Devin.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Patricia Owens

STATE OF ILLINOIS )
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COUNTY OF WILL )

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**VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT**

Honorable Judge Richard Schoenstedt,

In 2007, Gilbert Knowles showed his true colors. He has always used and manipulated people for his own self-centered reasons. In one selfish act, he destroyed my life as well as the lives of numerous people. He violently murdered my son, Devin Owens. How a man can beat a defenseless child the way he did still boggles my mind. Devin lived in fear and pain at the hands of Gilbert Knowles for the last months of his life. I wish I had known it was fear when Devin clung onto me when I dropped him off at home after our visitations. I always thought he missed me and didn't want to leave me. I live everyday with the guilt of not protecting Devin. I wish I had known then what I know now and I could have done things differently and prevented Devin's horrific death.

After Devin died, I fell into a deep depression. I withdrew from everyone, even my two precious daughters. I could not bear to lose someone else I loved so much, so I didn't want to love anyone. It was difficult to function and to take care of my girls. Gilbert took my son from me physically but also took my daughters from me emotionally.

Since Gilbert's conviction, I have achieved some peace. As time has passed, I have started to live life again and I am not just going through the motions. Gilbert Knowles was my best friend for several years before that horrible night. I have always said I would die for my friends and family. Gilbert Knowles achieved that when he murdered Devin. A piece of me died on that day and I will never be the same again. I can hear people whisper about how I am not the same person. I am not that same smiling person.

My daughter, Aleena, was a baby when Devin was murdered. She will never know her brother. She only knows Devin through pictures and stories and continues to talk about him all the time. My daughter, Madilynn, was only five when Devin died. It was a long time before she could sleep through the night. She seemed withdrawn at times. The security of being in a safe haven was ripped away by Gilbert Knowles.

My whole family was affected. Family gatherings are not the same. The joyous fun times no longer exist. I look at my dad and see a broken man. He is not the same happy person. I look into his eyes and see only sadness. It is hard for me to play with my nephews who are around the same age as Devin would have been. Every time I look at them I see Devin and it still hurts. It is hard for me to be around other small children. I will not be able to watch Devin grow, hit his first homerun, teach him to drive, watch him get married and carry on my family's name. Others have also been deeply affected. There are future friends who will never be able to meet my smiling, laid back loving boy. No one will ever be able meet his wife and children, teachers will never know how smart he could have been, coaches will never be able to see him succeed in sports, reporters, maybe some in this room, will never be able to write about his achievements.

I also had a loving relationship with the Knowles family. I considered his mother and father my second mom and dad. His brothers were my brothers. Two of his girls are my goddaughters. My relationship with his family will never be the same again if I even have one at all.

At Gilbert Knowles' trial, he showed no emotion all. He did not show any remorse for the horrendous act he committed against my defenseless son, Devin. We will never know why this happened without Gilbert Knowles accepting what he did and ask for forgiveness. Until that day, I hope Devin's face and his screams haunt Gilbert Knowles every time he closes his eyes. Because of all the people's lives Gilbert has disrupted and changed forever and the vicious way he murdered Devin, I ask the Court to give Gilbert Knowles the maximum sentence allowable under the law. His freedom is the least thing that should be taken from him. It will not bring Devin back, but it will give me and my family a sense of justice so we can move one with our lives.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Bryan Owens

Bryan Owens