

# Murder from page 1A

nation is 8:30 a.m. Friday in 47th District Court in Farmington.

Jackie Ponke died from massive head injuries suffered after she received several blows to the head with a hammer.

## Happened without warning

Witnesses said the attacker entered the dental office without warning and began striking Jackie Ponke, who was assisting Bredin with a patient at the time. Bredin tried to stop the man, but was pushed away.

Bredin told police that as the attacker struck the victim, he said, "If I can't see my daughter (Ashley, 9), you won't either."

Bredin and the patient, who was having her teeth cleaned, went to a James Court residence to phone police.

"She (Jackie Ponke) was a tender soul, an angel," said Judy Bredin, wife of Alan Bredin. "She cared for patients, she cared for her husband. She cared for her daughter."

"She would exchange recipes with patients. It was a family-oriented office. She made it that way."

On Monday, Bredin's office was closed. Bredin wasn't sure when it

would reopen.

Bredin and three employees attended a counseling session Monday to deal with the tragedy.

"The girls are really having a bad time with this," Bredin said. "Two of the three girls are leaving lights on at night time and having visions of him stalking them. . . . It's a tremendous shock."

## Escape routes planned

Bredin said he made plans in case Jackie Ponke's husband carried out his threats — which ranged from "cutting her into five pieces with a chainsaw" to burning down the family's Oxford home.

He said doorknobs were covered with dental plastic, so employees could shut the door and hide. He also turned on all the locks so when doors were shut they would be secure.

"The plan was whoever saw him coming in the drive or coming up the walk, that they would give a warning that Ray was coming, and we would start slamming the doors," Bredin said. "We thought that would only slow him down. We would go out in the back and circle around and go to a patient's house where we would call the police."

On Saturdays, though, Bredin and Ponke worked alone for a few hours, seeing patients who couldn't get in during the week.

"And he knew that," said Bredin remorsefully.

The dental office on Freedom Road was a second home to Jackie Ponke. She started work there as a co-student while attending Farmington High, from which she graduated in 1976.

## 'She was dedicated'

Bredin remembers the school sent over three girls. He and his wife picked Jackie. After her cop was finished, she was offered a full-time job.

When a heavy snowfall was predicted recently, Bredin said she took home a bagful of charts and account cards and a typewriter in case she was stranded. She typed statements at home.

"She was dedicated," said brother Stephen Lutz Jr. "Dr. Bredin was like a father to her. He treated her like a daughter."

Mindy Nassar has been a regular patient of Alan Bredin and knew Jackie Ponke for several years. Nassar said she was horrified at the news of her murder.

"When you came in, she always

made you feel welcomed," Nassar said. "She always made an effort just to ask everyone — especially me and my husband — how they were doing."

"I couldn't believe it. It was the farthest thing in my mind of what could happen to her, of all people."

Friends and family members said the victim kept domestic problems to herself. Her brother Dennis Lutz said that only recently did she confide to him there was trouble.

"I think she had compassion toward her husband," Dennis Lutz said on why she didn't tell anyone until recently. "She gave him another chance and he hoped things would work out."

## There were incidents

Two incidents, though, brought the trouble to light.

Raymond Ponke is suspected of taking a sledgehammer to the family's home Christmas Day, causing \$50,000 in damages. Walls were knocked out, toilets and sinks were destroyed and fixtures broken during the ransacking.

Oxford police Chief John LeRoy said his department was seeking a warrant on the matter.

Oxford police also received a report of a parental kidnapping

when Raymond Ponke had taken his daughter to Tennessee, LeRoy said.

"Basically it was a husband and wife situation at that point," LeRoy said. "He had as much right to have her as anyone."

The department also received a call of family trouble on Nov. 20 at the Ponke residence, LeRoy said. Raymond Ponke had been drinking, but LeRoy said Jackie Ponke "didn't express any fear about him at that point."

"A lot of people think we were there a lot," LeRoy said, "but we weren't."

A restraining order and a spousal abuse injunction had been filed Jan. 4, according to records obtained by Farmington police. Jackie Ponke filed for divorce on Dec. 6 and was living with friends.

## He was despondent

Raymond Ponke, who was a mold maker, had been unemployed for awhile. Friends said he was despondent over it.

"I believe that's what originally triggered it off," said Sue Kin, who has known Raymond Ponke since they were both students at Farmington High. "And then his mom has been real sick the last few weeks and had to go into a nursing home. Then with being

served with the restraining order and divorce papers, that was the last straw."

The Kins bowled with the Ponkes in a mixed league at Country Lanes in Farmington on Friday nights.

Kin said the couple met at Country Lanes where Jackie had worked behind the snack bar. They dated a few years before getting married. They had been married 15 years.

Sue Kin said she noticed Raymond Ponke became verbally abusive to his wife.

"Anything that went wrong at the house or anything, if it wasn't picked up or spelt out, he'd rip into her," Kin said. "She tried to get him to do the housework while she worked to help out, so she wouldn't have to do everything."

Added her brother Stephen Lutz Jr.: "He was always calling her 'Miss Perfect.' He wasn't enough of a man to see her as that. He was nothing but a coward by what he did to her."

Sue Kin called Jackie the "sweetest person in the whole world, who will be missed by everybody she has known."

Friends and family have set up a trust fund for Ashley Ponke at the Oxford Bank, 60 S. Washington, Oxford 48371.

## LWV offers state government info

Looking for information about state government? The League of Women Voters has a toll-free telephone service (1-800-292-5823) that may be helpful.

The league's Citizen Information Center in Lansing offers to

help people find out about such things as pending legislation, the state constitution, election laws, voting regulations or tax information.

The telephone is answered from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. weekdays.

The telephone service is paid for by the league's education fund. The League of Women Voters is a non-profit organization that works to keep voters interested and informed about governmental issues.



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