

Holding on to hope

Community holds vigil to remember murdered teens and bring public awareness while waiting for justice



Danny Tindell / dtindell@dothaneagle.com

Eli Simpson, 5, pauses during a vigil in remembrance of JB Beasley and Tracie Hawlett in Ozark on Thursday.

Ebony Horton

ehorton@dothaneagle.com

OZARK

Ceramic angels, butterflies, frogs and fresh flowers surrounded a shrine of two crosses planted on Herring Avenue in remembrance of JB Beasley and Tracie Hawlett on Thursday.

Holding a white candle near the site was Tracie's mother, Carol Roberts, who started a vigil where the girls were found dead nine years ago today in hopes their lives, and their murder, would never be forgotten.



**JB
Beasley**



**Tracie
Hawlett**

"It prides my heart to know that people still come out," Roberts said as she unpacked a picture of the teens from her vehicle.

"This is our way of remembering them. It bothers me

"It prides my heart to know that people still come out."

Carol Roberts

Tracie Hawlett's mother

that someone might forget."

Ozark Police say not a week goes by in which the double murder is not investigated. Neither have some residents let a year go by without revisiting the case, and the site, where the teens were left dead in the trunk of JB's vehicle.

Sunday:

Cases that are still pending in the Wiregrass

"It's sadder every year. The main thing is we would like to see a resolution and have it brought to justice, closure," Ozark resident Marilyn Lee said.

Resident Keisha Johnson agreed.

See **HOPE**, 3A

Hope

continued from 1A

"We're a close-knit community, and I think this brings public awareness. Even when it's solved, I think people still need to be aware this can happen," she said.

Patti Simpson stood at the vigil with her two sons.

"We're here to let them know somebody loves them very, very much," she said.

Roberts said she plans to hold it every year, even after whoever killed the teens is brought to justice.

Her husband, Mike, said he hoped the vigil would touch someone's conscience who might have information about the murders.

The day someone is tried in court for the deaths is a day Dale County District Attorney

Kirke Adams said he also hopes for.

"It's sad that we continue to come here every year to mourn these two girls, and we still don't know who took their lives," he said.

Ozark Police Chief Tony Spivey said the case has also been sent to the state attorney general's cold case division and has been investigated by the Alabama Bureau of Investigation, whom Spivey said did one of the initial investigations of the crime scene.

Dale County Sheriff's Investigator Marlos Walker said the department was also active in the search for JB and Tracie's killer.

The Roberts' friend, Quentina Hall, said it was somewhat soothing to know the case was still in the light and that a possible arrest could be made soon.

"It's some help, to an extent," she said.