

Governor declaring official Greg Gaul Day

By Bob Bjoin
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DES MOINES -- Iowa Gov. Thomas Vilsack Thursday will officially declare Thursday, March 11 Greg L. Gaul Day in Iowa, paying tribute to professional social workers statewide and honoring Gaul, a Shelby County native who was the victim in a double homicide in Johnston in January.

Friends and family members are expected to be on hand Thursday as Vilsack will sign a proclamation declaring March, 2004 as Social Work Month in Iowa.

Vilsack also will pay special recognition to Gaul for "his deep commitment to the well being of Iowa children and their families." He will call upon Iowans to remember Gaul's family, as he had supported so many Iowa families. He called Gaul a "respected member of the social work community who gave his life serving his client."

Mary Petersen, Greg's sister, called it a proud moment for their family because the focus can be on Greg's life and not his death.



Greg Gaul

by Greg's death. The month being designated as Social Workers Month, with one day set aside by the governor honoring Greg, "helps us to know that what social workers do actually makes a big difference in many people's lives.

"This was shown to us by those he touched. Thanks for all your care, love and support for his family."

Senseless act

Gaul, who has numerous family members in the Shelby County area, was found shot to death. Also killed was a 21-year-old house-sit-

Gaul please see next page

"Greg truly touched many lives with his positive attitude and his enthusiasm for living," she said.

Aggie Gaul, Greg's mother, said the family was very saddened

ter, Sarah Dahlke, of Marshalltown.

A national manhunt was enacted for 16-year-old Tyler Pirtle, a sophomore at Johnston High School. Pirtle was found later that week in Colorado, the victim of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Gaul was a Harlan Community High School graduate. He was a long-time social worker who had recently started Life Works, Inc. He was on the job when the tragic shooting took place.

Greg's sister, Cindy Assmann, said she hopes people remember Greg as a regular, fun-loving guy.

"When faced with choices, he most often chose the most giving thing," she said. "He listened with his whole self and responded with interest. He could make you feel important and always loved. He loved to laugh and sing, and was good at both."

Sister Susie Mahlberg said the recognition day is very meaningful for their family.

"If anyone who didn't know Greg learns of him through this kind of recognition, I think it will make that person want to live like

he did," she said.

"If one thing comes of this senseless act, I think it is all of us want to be better. We want to live a more meaningful life...not that we all go out and change careers or anything, but maybe we just try to be more Christ-like in what we do."

Family members said Greg was all about love -- loving his God, wife, Nan, children, family and friends, as well as the families he served through Life Works.

Brother Tim said, "It's a wonderful tribute to Greg. It's a powerful reminder to all of us that ordinary people can accomplish great things through a life of compassion, service, and playful adventure."