

[The Surviving Parents Coalition: Press Conference March 11th, 2009](#)

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<http://www.survivingparentscoalition.org/bio-dalessandro.php>

STFA President Dave Jones met with the D'Allesandro family on Wed, March 11, 2009 in Trenton to speak in support of the Coalitions mission. A petition with thousands of names was delivered to the NJ State Parole Board in an effort to prevent the release of Joseph McGowan....

On Thursday, April 19, 1973 Joan D' Alessandro, a joyful, brave, seven-year old Brownie Scout was delivering Girl Scout cookies to her neighbor when she disappeared. A high school chemistry teacher who lived three doors down later plead guilty to her murder. After Joan was sexually assaulted and murdered the Girl Scouts changed their rules for all children to prevent another such tragedy.

When Joan's killer became eligible for parole in 1993, Rosemarie D' Alessandro organized a letter writing, green ribbon campaign that led officials to deny the parole. (Joan's favorite color was green and the ribbons symbolize, "Remember Joan Today So Tomorrow's Children Will Be Safe.") The idea that a child murderer could be released from prison spurred Rosemarie to work for passage of a mandatory minimum sentencing law. After 3 years of lobbying, a bill denying the possibility of parole to offenders who murder while committing a sex crime was passed by the New Jersey Legislature in April 1997. Following that victory, Rosemarie spearheaded a successful campaign for a federal version of "Joan's Law," which was signed by President Bill Clinton in October 1998. All the while her daughter's killer continued to file appeals to his sentence paid for by a sizeable inheritance. This led Rosemarie to protect other victims by designing a bill eliminating New Jersey's 2 year statute of limitations on suing murderers, which passed in November 2000. Then after four years of work "Joan's Law" became the law in New York State in 2004. Her sons Michael and John, born after Joan was killed, have also been advocates for the legislation. In addition to her legislative efforts, Rosemarie reaches out to abused and neglected children through The Joan Angela D' Alessandro Foundation she established in 1998. In 2004 she received the Attorney General's Special Courage Award for her efforts.

In early 2009 Joseph McGowan will be eligible for parole again because "Joan's Law" is not retroactive. The movement will continue as we unite our communities to protect all children and keep child killers in prison because that is where they belong.