

STATEMENT FOR THE PRESS
BY PAULINE MITCHELL, MOTHER OF FRED C. MARTINEZ, JR.

"I feel it is time to talk about the death of my son, Fred C. Martinez, Jr.

"I am his mother and now I want to make sure the truth is told about Fred by people who loved him. With more and more talk about his death, the police looking into his murder, and the details of my son's personal life in the media, it is time to speak the truth about Fred's life.

"The most important thing I can say is that I loved Fred. I loved my son exactly for who he was, for his courage in being honest and gentle and friendly. It is sad that he had to face pain in his daily life and in school.

"I am speaking out now because I am angry. I am angry that other people are lying about who my son was, including Shaun Murphy and his family. I want to make sure that Fred has people speaking the truth about his life. I am angry that the police have not taken the time to explain what is happening and help me deal with this. I don't want to read about new things in the newspaper.

"I reported that Fred was missing on June 18. Two days later I called the police again, and on June 23 I read about a body being found near our home. I phoned the police again, but they told me the body had not been identified. Since June 25, when the police told me at work that Fred had been murdered, I wondered if it was because of who he was and how he expressed himself. Violence was a common part of his life, and as I learn more, I know that this was a crime based on anger and hate. His friends, other students at school, and family friends have told me things

that make me know that Shaun Murphy picked Fred out to chase and beat him.

"One of the places that Fred faced a lot of trouble was in school. I blame the people in charge at the school for not making sure he was safe. I am angry that they thought Fred was the problem. Fred tried very hard to fit in. People in charge shouldn't treat children differently just because they aren't like them. I hope that they will listen to me and other people who care about what happened to Fred.



"Fred was a member of the Native American Church. A lot of Native American Church members prayed for Fred and his family.

"What I wanted for my son was for him to be accepted and loved, just like I accepted and loved him. Fred was always proud to be Navajo. Fred did not struggle with who he was, but he was hurt because of the people who had problems with my son expressing himself honestly. I hope that the police and the District Attorney will talk about this and bring justice for the death of my son. I

am grateful to Fred's friends for accepting him the way he was and remembering him for who he was. Fred's family loved and cared deeply for all of who he was. We firmly believe that Fred's murder was a hate crime.

"Because he was different his life was taken from him, and we will never know the person Fred would have become."

JULY 18, 2001

Memorial artwork by Merle Dukai