



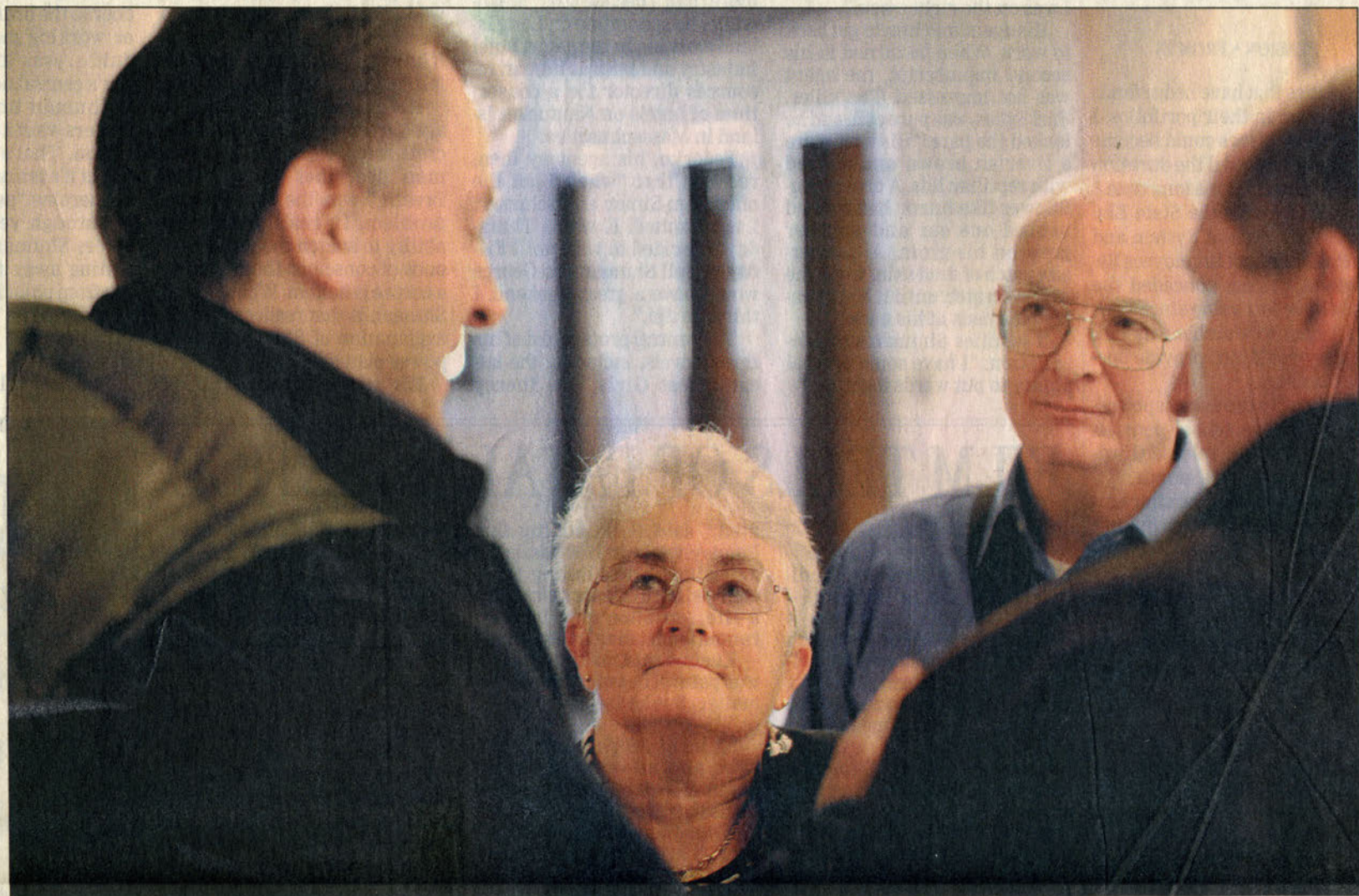
TRIBUNE-REVIEW LOCAL

SECTION

B

Monday,
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authority, union officials meet in D.C. **B6** • Lawmaker leaves memorable goodbye **B6**



ERIC SCHMADEL/TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Kathleen Bagby (center) and David Bagby, the parents of Dr. Andrew Bagby, who was murdered in 2001, talk with director Kurt Kuenne (left) before the screening of "Dear Zachary," a film about their son by Kuenne, Andrew's childhood friend at Saint Vincent College near Latrobe.

FILM TELLS OF FATAL INJUSTICE

The slayer of an area doctor was out on bail in Canada when she killed herself and their child.

BY A.J. PANIAN
TRIBUNE-REVIEW



Bagby



Turner

Mary Lou Fischer's eyes softened with sorrow Sunday recalling times she spent driving her son, Karl, back and forth from the St. Andrews Episcopal Church & School in Saratoga, Calif., with his childhood friends, Andrew Bagby and Kurt Kuenne.

"The school was a good drive away so we'd always stop for Baskin-Robbins" ice cream, said Fischer, 66, of Allison Park, beside her son Karl Fischer, 35, of Shaler.

Fischer, Bagby and Kuenne stayed close over time and achieved rewarding careers as a software engineer, a physician and a filmmaker, respectively.

The Fischers and Kuenne reunited yesterday at St. Vincent

College in Unity with about 70 others in sullen remembrance of Bagby, who was shot to death in 2001 by his former lover, Dr. Shirley Turner, at Keystone State Park in Derry Township. She later gave birth to their son, Zachary Andrew Turner, in 2002.

Bagby's family, friends and professional colleagues watched an invitation-only, advance-screening of "Dear Zachary — A Letter To A Son About His Father" at the school's Robert S. Carey Event Center.

"It's just unbelievable what happened," Mary Lou Fischer said. "We wanted to be here for support."

The documentary — directed and scored by Kuenne — exposes both the painfully-slow legal prosecution of Turner in St. John's, Newfoundland for Bagby's murder and the grief endured by Bagby's parents — David and Kathleen Bagby — as Turner remained free on bail in the Canadian country long enough to throw herself off a wharf into the Atlantic Ocean, drowning herself and their 13-month-old grandson in 2003.

Turner grew up in poverty in Newfoundland and became a chemistry teacher before going to medical school, where she began a relationship with Andrew Bagby in the 1990s. Turner, who held Canadian citizenship, fled to Newfoundland after she was charged by the state with Bagby's murder. She waged a legal fight to avoid extradition to Greensburg and a possible sentence of life in prison.

David and Kathleen Bagby moved to St. John's during that time to attempt to gain custody of Zachary. The courts not only granted Turner

bail but allowed her custody of the child.

During yesterday's screening, Hushed silence was accented only by occasional weeping and sudden bursts of genuine laughter as the audience took in professional and homespun film footage of Bagby's life. In the background, Kuenne provided rapid snippets of concise narration about his cross-country journey to interview those who knew Bagby and to meet young Zachary prior to the child's death.

From footage as a child playing games with Fischer and Kuenne to tender times dealing with the difficult, lonely experiences tied to becoming a doctor, the film portrays Bagby as a man loved and cherished by many but who got involved with the wrong woman.

"Andrew believed it's not how much one knows, rather it's knowing how much one cares," said Ralph Capone, Excelsa Health's chief medical officer.

SEE FILM • B2

FILM TELLS OF FATAL INJUSTICE

FILM • FROM BI

When asked about the audience's reaction to the film — which was loud applause — David Bagby said he hopes such enthusiasm transforms into efforts to help reform Canada's criminal bail laws to reduce the chances of such crimes occurring in the future.

"Please write to Canada's members of Parliament so that practical change can happen," said Bagby of Sunnyvale, Calif., who recently gained the ear of Alberta Sen. Tommy Banks after he watched the film. "If enough letters pile up on Canada's desk, we just might get reform."

Westmoreland County District Attorney John Peck, who dealt personally with lawyers in Newfoundland regarding the case, said change is imperative.

"It may have saved Zachary's life had Turner been incarcer-

ated," said Peck, adding that Pennsylvania in 1998 passed an amendment prohibiting those charged with offenses for which a life sentence may be warranted from being freed on bail.

Kuenne said making the film was painful based on its subject matter, but he feels glad he did so.

"A lot of people suffer injustices and no one ever hears about it," said Kuenne, who plans to screen "Dear Zachary" for Canadian parliament in January. "I'm satisfied to have completed this work and tell this story."

Two scholarship funds were established in Bagby's memory to support student physicians pursuing his specialty of family practice — The Dr. Andrew David Bagby Family Medicine Scholarship and The Dr. Andrew Bagby and son Zachary Bursary Fund.

Nature photographs taken by

Bagby were sold at the event to raise money for the funds.

Jill Murray, a physician at Excela Health's Norvelt branch and a recipient of one of the first scholarships, got the chance as a first-year medical student to rotate throughout various hospital departments to get a grasp of a family medical practice.

"It was a wonderful opportunity to experience what a small-town family practice was like," Murray said. "Dr. Bagby was assigned to the Saltsburg branch, and I wound up at Norvelt. They're both rural, so it's like we wanted the same things."

"Dear Zachary" has been screen in New York City since Oct. 31 and will air at 9 p.m. Dec. 7 on MSNBC. For more information on the film and the scholarships, access the movie's Web site at www.dearzachary.com.