

# Denise Brown's message is remembered

It happens everyday. It happens everywhere. It happens to women regardless of age, race, creed, religion, color, economic status or education. It happens to men too though in lesser numbers. Children are not spared. It happens to them also. It's ABUSE.

A year ago tomorrow, Denise Brown visited Evansville where I lived. Denise Brown is the Chair-

## DOROTHY WORD

LOCAL COLUMNIST



person of the Nicole Brown-Simpson Charitable Foundation created in memory of her sister, Nicole. I attended her program not as a curiosity-seeker but as a Child Advocate staff volunteer from Albion Fellows Bacon Center, the Evansville, Indiana Women's Abuse Shelter.

The Albion Fellows Bacon Center was one of the sponsors of Denise Brown's appearance. The place of meeting was the Marriott Hotel on U.S. 41, on the northern edge of the city. The huge conference room easily accommodated the crowd of an estimated 800 men and women; mostly women. County and city police were visibly in attendance apparently for security reasons. Camera crews and reporters were advised that questions about the O.J. trial verdict would not be entertained.

To the left of the dais, but to my right, was a colorful exhibit I could not interpret. It looked like someone's mosaic laundry left to dry in-house. Fortunately, the information packet placed on each chair prior to the meeting included a paper entitled, "The Clothesline Project" which provided the needed explanation. This visual display was made up of T-shirts hanging in clothesline fashion, decorated to represent each particular woman's abuse experience.

The T-shirts were color coded. White for women who have died of violence; yellow or beige for women who have been battered or assaulted; red, pink or orange for women who have been raped or sexually assaulted; blue or green for women survivors of incest or child sexual abuse; purple or lavender for women attacked because of their sexual orientation.

Welcomed to Evansville by Mayor Frank McDonald and introduced to the audience by Albion Fellows Bacon Center's Director Barbara Miller, Denise Brown came forward wearing Nicole's silver cross around her neck and a tiny angel pin on her lapel, in memory of her sister.

The Nicole Brown-Simpson Charitable Foundation's mission, Brown explained, is to educate the national and international communities to the dangers of family violence, and to help its victims find help. Its mission, also, is to help fund organizations that shelter and protect families caught in the crisis of family violence, Brown noted. Hoping to break the cycle of violence for the next generation, Brown stated that she has a program, "Hands Are Not For Hitting," designed for school age children.

When Denise Brown ended her speech, after the standing ovation — a line formed immediately with people wanting to thank her, support her and question her.