

Women Attorneys Association Support Legal Aid

If young Frankie Silver had been able to hire a good attorney she might have been spared the hangman's noose. So, she would be pleased to know that her unfortunate story has helped provide attorneys for poor people in Southwest Virginia, 170 years after her walk to the gallows. Perhaps we should explain:

In 1831, eighteen year old Frankie Silver was accused of axing to death her husband, Charlie, in their cabin in the mountains of western North Carolina. Young Charlie had three different graves since they didn't find him all at once. Two years later, Frankie became the first woman hanged for murder in North Carolina. Some people doubted that Frankie was guilty of that terrible murder. Nearly two centuries later, best selling author, Sharyn McCrumb discovered Frankie's story and turned it into a novel, *The Ballad of Frankie Silver*.

This year, the New River Valley Chapter of the Virginia Women Attorneys Association decided to hold a fundraiser for the Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society. When they invited Ms. McCrumb, who has celebrated the history and folklore of Appalachia in numerous books, to speak at the fundraiser, she chose *The Ballad of Frankie Silver* for her presentation. So, this November 19, Association members and friends met at Radford University to learn from Sharyn McCrumb about the story of Frankie Silver *and* to support Legal Aid. Our legal aid program will be able to assist more low income persons thanks to the Virginia Women Attorneys Association, Sharyn McCrumb and the story of Frankie Silver.

From the 2004 Annual Report for the SW Virginia Legal Aid Society