

Two-Time Emmy Winner,
New York Times Best-Selling Author,
and FFL Honorary Chair Patricia Heaton
Challenges Members: Back to You!

THE AMERICAN FEMINIST[®]

Feminists for Life of America

Six Remarkable Pro-Life Women

Say NO to the Status Quo[™]



THE AMERICAN FEMINIST®



Feminists for Life of America

"When a man steals to satisfy hunger, we may safely conclude that there is something wrong in society—so when a woman destroys the life of her unborn child, it is an evidence that either by education or circumstances she has been greatly wronged."
—Mattie Brinkerhoff, *The Revolution*, September 2, 1869



FALL/WINTER

2007

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Established in 1972, Feminists for Life of America is a nonsectarian, nonpartisan, grassroots organization that seeks real solutions to the challenges women face. Our efforts are shaped by the core feminist values of justice, nondiscrimination, and nonviolence. Feminists for Life of America continues the tradition of early American feminists such as Susan B. Anthony, who opposed abortion. Feminists for Life of America recognizes that abortion is a reflection that our society has failed to meet the needs of women. We are dedicated to systematically eliminating the root causes that drive women to abortion—primarily lack of practical resources and support—through holistic, woman-centered solutions. Women Deserve Better® than abortion. Feminists for Life of America is a 501(c)3 organization. All donations are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

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Say **NO** to the Status Quo:™ Women Deserve Better®



FFL President Serrin Foster's father, William A. Foster, was a parenting student at University of Maryland. Serrin's dad, who was "a real foster child" when orphaned during the Great Depression, believed that education shouldn't stop with having children. Bill later achieved his master's and doctorate degrees while Serrin was in college.

Serrin's mother, Donna Hayden Foster, was pregnant with Serrin's sister Lulu when she took this photo of Serrin in her father's arms at his graduation. Serrin's mother was an early Birthright volunteer who inspired Serrin's first speech in college, which argued for the rights of the unborn during the reawakening of feminism in the '70s.

Six remarkable women have joined FFL's Honorary Chair, Patricia Heaton, Co-Chair Margaret Colin, Board Member and birthmother Jessica O'Connor Petts (featured on the back cover) and me to answer some of life's toughest questions on college campuses:

- What would you choose if you discovered you were pregnant, by either the man you love—or a rapist?
- How would you react if you learned you were never actually born—but were aborted, and survived?
- Would you be willing to stand before a group of strangers and share about your abortion if it would help others?
- If your boyfriend reacted to your pregnancy by saying, "Make it go away or I'll go away," which would you choose?
- How would you pass on the gift of life if your mother risked her life for you?
- What if both your pro-life and pro-choice friends abandoned you because you made the rarest choice?

Reactions to the inaugural presentations by our new speakers at a Capitol Hill intern briefing demonstrate the need for these compelling stories to reach those who may become pregnant and feel they have little choice, as well as their family and friends—and our future leaders.

One young woman put it best: "It is hard for people who disagree with us to dispute someone's experience because it is just that, her experience. She has gone through it. She has been there. These women are amazing and inspiring and I look forward to seeing the good they do spreading their message to colleges around the country! If women who have had those same experiences hear them talking about it, it may help them get through it."

As Feminists for Life concludes our 35th anniversary, and as we approach the 35th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, it is my honor to announce six new Remarkable Pro-Life Women® who will help us create a world where parenting students don't have to choose between their children and their educations. A world where life is championed at its weakest, most vulnerable moments. A world where mothers—and fathers—are honored and supported.

Let us sound the new rallying cry for the next generation:
Say NO to the Status Quo.™

Because women deserve better,

Serrin M. Foster
President

I Was Aborted AND I Survived

Melissa Ohden



Melissa on the day she came home to her parents, October 27, 1977.

I am the “product” of an unsuccessful abortion.

In August of 1977, my 19-year-old biological mother had a saline infusion abortion. Saline abortions involve injecting a caustic, saline solution into the amniotic fluid that surrounds the unborn baby as it floats in the mother’s womb. This saline solution causes the fetus to be scalded to death and then delivered dead.

At the time that she presented herself for the abortion, my biological mother was estimated to be somewhere between 18 and 22 weeks pregnant. Throughout the course of a five-day period, I endured so much. My lungs breathed in and my tiny mouth swallowed the toxic salt solution, while numerous rounds of Pitocin, delivered to my mother to induce labor and expel my dead body, forced me from the womb with the intent to take my life.

When I was delivered in bed by a nurse that fifth day, I was believed to be dead. Weighing a mere 2 pounds, 14 ounces, suffering from jaundice and severe respiratory distress, I appeared to have a bleak future, **but I was alive.**

My biological parents placed me for adoption. As an infant, doctors believed that I would suffer from any one of a number of physical and emotional disabilities as a result of the abortion procedure and my subsequent premature birth.

Despite the ominous predictions that were made regarding my future, I was wanted. My parents adopted me, knowing full well that as they opened their hearts and their home to me, they took a chance on raising a child who would quite probably not live past her infancy. If I did survive, I would more than likely be disabled.

It was a shock to find out the truth about how I entered this world, something I learned as a young teen. When I think about my adoptive mother telling me about the abortion, it pains me greatly. The abortion, the reality of possibly never having me in her life or in this world, hurts her, just as it hurts me.

I spent many years of my life being ashamed and embarrassed by the abortion attempt that my biological mother underwent. When I was younger, I was hurt, assuming that so little was thought of me and my potential for life.

I have also struggled with strong feelings of guilt for being physically, mentally, and emotionally able; I know full well that millions of babies each year are not as lucky as I was. I am truly blessed to be alive, nonetheless, and to be perfectly happy, healthy, and successful. Instead of being angry or bitter about the circumstances that surrounded my arrival into this world, I have chosen to be grateful.

After many years of soul-searching and self-healing, **the time has come for me to share my story and provide a voice for those who are voiceless**, the unborn children who are killed by abortion each and every day, and their mothers who felt driven to abortion.

In the United States alone, it is estimated that there are **3,700 lives ended by abortion every day**. I was meant to be one of those 3,700 children.

If the abortion had been successful, I would have died before I could experience the deep love and affection that a parent has for a child and, likewise, that a child has for a parent. I would not have known my brother and sister.

If the abortion had been successful, I would not have been able to witness the births of my niece and three nephews or be able to spoil them rotten and applaud their victories. I would never have met my husband and would never have had the opportunity to look to the future as we plan for a family of our own.

If the abortion had been successful, I would never have been able to graduate from high school and college or obtain my graduate degree in social work. I would never have been able to touch the lives of others by teaching them in their high school or college classrooms. I would never have provided counseling and therapy services to children who have been abused, adolescents recovering from substance abuse and mental health disorders, women who survived domestic violence and sexual assault, or women recovering from their addictions.



Melissa and Ryan on their 2005 wedding day.

“I have chosen to be grateful.”

I truly believe that if my biological mother, as an undergraduate student, had felt that there was support for other choices (marital, partnered, single parenthood, or the various options for adoption) and had had the resources to support these choices, she would not have made that fateful decision to end my life. I believe that if she had not felt that she had to decide between her child and her life as she knew it, she wouldn't have to live with that decision to this day.

I deserved better than abortion, and I am grateful to my parents that they chose adoption. **The 3,700 unborn children killed each day in America deserve better than abortion. They deserve parents like mine. I believe with all my heart that my biological mother deserved better, too.** ♦

Melissa's Mom Remembers

“They were just going to leave her there to die.”

Linda Cross calls Melissa her “miracle baby,” and even today Cross breaks down when she talks about the circumstances of Melissa’s birth on August 29, 1977. Cross adopted Melissa, the second of three children she and her husband raised.

“She was so little. She was a gorgeous, gorgeous baby. A total delight. It’s heartbreaking that they were going to leave her to die. That just breaks my heart that they tried to kill her,” Cross recalled. “She was to be born in December but was aborted at the end of August. We went through Social Services and they told us about this premature baby. We had to drive to Iowa City to see Melissa. She was just two pounds and we could not bring her home until she was five pounds....

“Just holding her, you knew you had to take her home. She was a very, very determined baby—that is how she was when she was first aborted almost 30 years ago. They were just going to leave her there to die and they saw she was so determined. So they shaved her head and began an IV [intravenous feeding], because she was too small to get the IV any other way.”

In fact, Cross said even today as she thinks about this: “That is just so sad, so sad.” But Melissa has been a joy to her family, her mother noted: “I can’t say enough about her, she is truly wonderful....She does truly believe she is here for a purpose. She has a story to tell.” ♦

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DON R. COUGHENOUR
DEPUTY REGISTRAR

Norman L. Pawlewski
NORMAN L. PAWLEWSKI
STATE REGISTRAR

JAN 16 80

STATE OF IOWA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
114- 77-029556

CERTIFICATE OF LIVE BIRTH STATE FILE NUMBER

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| CHILD-NAME 1. MELISSA SEX 2. Female | FIRST ANN MIDDLE CROSS | DATE OF BIRTH (Mo., Day, Yr.) 3a. August 29, 1977 | HOUR 3b. 3:40 P. M. |
| HOSPITAL 4a. Medical Center | CITY, TOWN OR LOCATION OF BIRTH 4b. Sioux City | COUNTY OF BIRTH Woodbury | |
| I certify that the stated information concerning this child is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. 5a. (Signature) /S/ M. R. Kelberg, M. D. | | DATE SIGNED (Mo., Day, Yr.) 5b. Sept. 7, 1977 | NAME AND TITLE OF ATTENDANT AT BIRTH IF OTHER THAN CERTIFIER (Type or print) 5c. |
| CERTIFIER—NAME AND TITLE (Type or print) 5d. M. R. Kelberg, M. D. REGISTRAR | | MAILING ADDRESS (Street or R.F.D. No., City or Town, State, Zip) 2918 Hamilton Blvd., Sioux City, Iowa | |
| 6a. (Signature) /S/ Margaret G. Schima | | DATE RECEIVED BY REGISTRAR (Mo., Day, Yr.) 6b. September 12, 1977 | |
| MOTHER—MAIDEN NAME | FIRST | MIDDLE | LAST |

ST. LUKE'S MEDICAL CENTER

SIOUX CITY, IOWA

GIVEN NAME OF BABY _____ SEX Male HOSP. NO. 76828
 DATE OF BIRTH 8/29/77 TIME _____ COLOR _____ TYPE OF DELIVERY VSD
 DOCTOR W. J. ... PEDIATRICAN _____ FEEDING Bottle
 IDENTIFICATION NO. 1034 SIGNATURE OF NURSE APPLYING BAND, TAKING FOOT PRINTS _____
 NAME OF MOTHER _____ PARA 20 25
 NAME OF FATHER _____ PHONE _____
 ADDRESS So. Lehigh City, Nebraska
 RH A-pos RELIGION Cath CIRCUMCISION _____ DISMISSAL DATE _____
 ROOM NUMBER _____

CONSULTATION

314 East 31st, So. Sioux City, NE.

Mother;

Baby Girl

Admit Intensive Care Nursery on August 29, 1977.

W-OBN

Date of Birth: 8/29/77.

This baby was born prematurely to a 19-year-old unmarried mother. According to the mother's hospital record, her last menstrual period was 5/01/77, however, she reportedly stated she had had no period in March or April. She was estimated to be about 18 weeks pregnant. On August 24th, Saline infusion for an abortion was done but was unsuccessful. On August 27th, Pitocin drip was started. It was also repeated on August 28th. Her bag of water broke about 6:30 PM. Pitocin drip was continued on the 29th. The baby was delivered spontaneously in bed by a nurse. Apgar at one minute was reported to be 6 and at 5 minutes 2. The baby is reported to have had a spontaneous weak cry, it was a vertex ROA presentation. The mother is reported to be a Group A, Rh positive. The baby was brought to the Intensive Care Nursery and was put in about 35 percent O2, was bagged some and respirations were established but the cry remained rather weak. Capillary blood gases were ordered. pH was 7.07, pCO2 62, CO2 20, pO2 was 51. Exam revealed a premature infant. In 35 percent O2. She has some grunting and retracting. Respirations are approximately 42 per minute. The pulse was 140. The color was relatively pink. Birth weight was approximately 1,300 grams. Skull symmetrical. There is some bruising. Fontanelle is soft. Eyes, ears, nose and throat, pupils reactive to light. Ears, nose and throat were negative.

LUNGS: Respirations around 60 per minute. There is only fair air entry. There is some grunting and retracting.

HEART: Not enlarged. NO murmurs.

Rate 140 per minute.

ABDOMEN: Soft. No masses.

Liver, kidneys and spleen not enlarged. No hernias.

GENITALIA: Negative.

EXTREMITIES: Negative.

IMPRESSION:

Prematurity, probably is developing a respiratory distress syndrome.

Recommend, Bicarb, Plasmonate, umbilical artery catheterization and so forth.

JB:ila

St. Luke's

7024 8/27/77

Dictated: 8/31/77

INFANT CONSULTATION

How Often Are Aborted Babies Born Alive?

By Valerie M. Schmalz

The story of Melissa Ohden is remarkable, but her story fits the medical facts of saline abortion.

Melissa Ohden was exceptionally fortunate because the hospital and doctor decided to give her the medical care necessary to save her life in 1977, said Elizabeth Shadigian, president of the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists, which is a special interest group of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG).

“It is a complication to have a live baby; it is one of the worst complications for an abortion,” said Shadigian, Adjunct Clinical Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at University of Michigan and a member of Feminists for Life. Shadigian was an expert witness for the federal government in two of the appellate courts in the partial-birth abortion ban act challenge and reviewed the medical literature on second- and third-trimester abortion in preparation for her testimony. The U.S. Supreme Court on April 18, 2007, in *Gonzales v. Carhart* upheld the 2003 federal Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act.

“Many babies born alive during abortions are just ignored because they need oxygen and other medical support,” said Shadigian. “There are only case reports of children being born alive in the U.S. but not a lot of hard numbers since everyone is trying to do this in secret; no one really wants to talk about this.”

Today saline abortions are rarely performed. However, babies continue to survive other types of abortions, although most are left to die unattended, according to medical literature and anecdotal reports.

Live births during abortion are a persistent issue for the abortion industry, as an October 2007 essay in the journal *Social Science & Medicine* shows. This article examines “feticide,” in a public admission a baby is killed. According to an abstract published on PubMed.gov, “. . . recently the medical profession has expressed some uncertainty with respect to the legal position of live birth following TOP [termination of pregnancy], and professional discretion in providing feticide.”

A study of regional hospitals published in 2007 in the *British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology* found 3 percent of induced abortions resulted in a live baby who was left to die, with most dying within 80 minutes but at least one infant lingering for six hours.

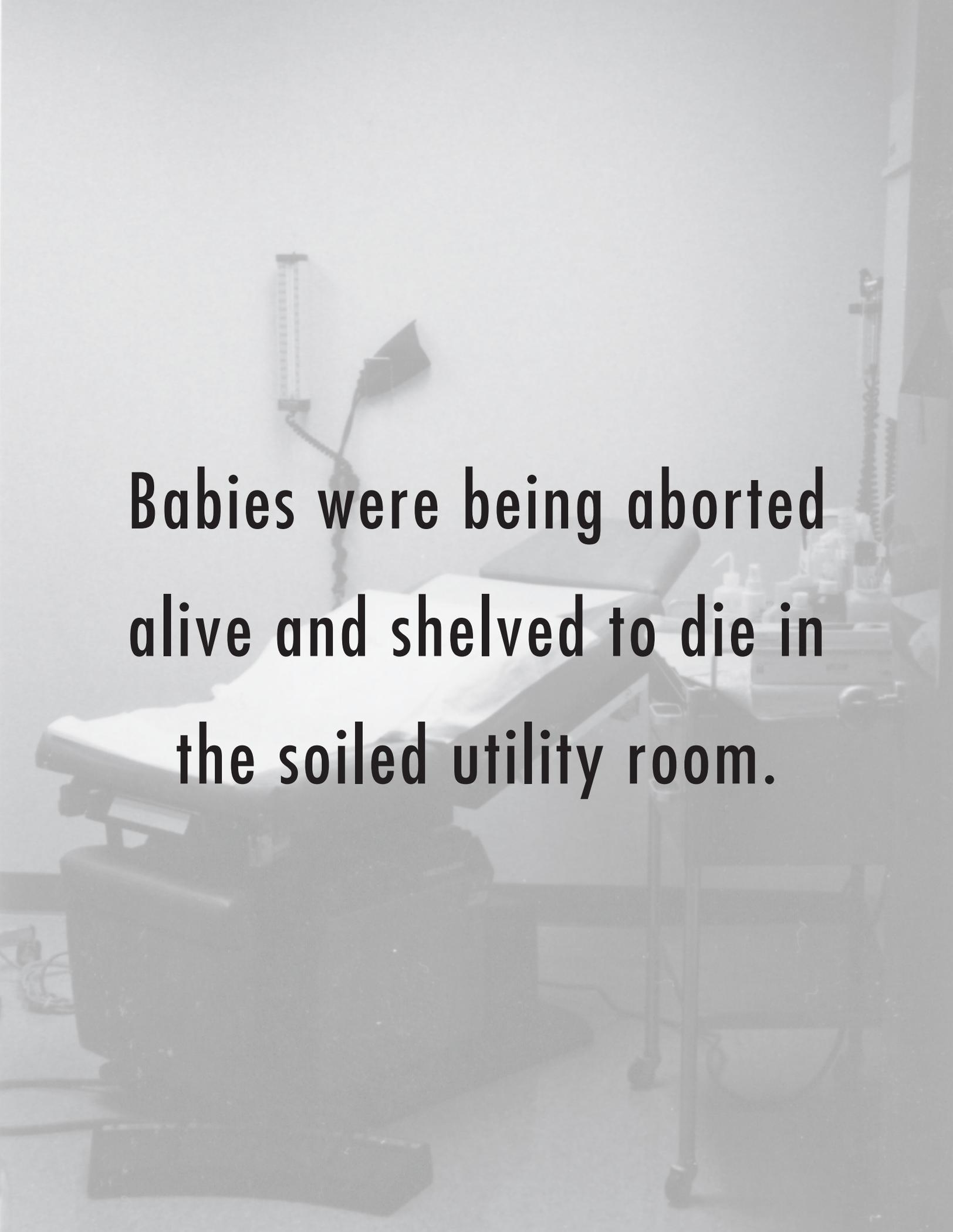
The study, carried out by the West Midlands Perinatal Institute, looked at the outcomes of 3,189 abortions performed at 20 United Kingdom hospitals between 1995 and 2004 because the unborn child had a disability of some kind. It showed that 102 children, or around one in 30, were born alive, according to an April 20, 2007, BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) report.

Babies appear to most commonly survive second-trimester induced abortions, which are performed using drugs or, alternatively, laminaria (seaweed sticks) that prematurely dilate the woman’s cervix, causing the baby to fall out, said obstetrical nurse and pro-life advocate Jill Stanek. Stanek said babies have also been known, rarely, to survive surgical abortions, but with a physical malformation due to the abortion attempt.

After reviewing Melissa Ohden’s medical record, FFL member Dr. Pam Smith, who testified before Congress in favor of the partial birth abortion ban, said Melissa may have been born slightly later in gestation than her biological mother believed. “With a birth weight of 1300 grams, the baby was probably 28-29 weeks old,” she observed. And Smith said that one of the reasons the partial birth abortion method was developed was to prevent “accidents” or “treatment failures” like Melissa from happening. In partial birth abortion, the baby is partially delivered and then killed.

Stanek’s experience as a Chicago nurse, discovering “babies were being aborted alive and shelved to die in the soiled utility room,” led her to mobilize support for the Born Alive Infants Protection Act, which was signed into federal law in 2002. The law has no penalties, and Stanek knows of no instance in which it has been enforced. ◆

Editor Valerie M. Schmalz is a former Associated Press reporter who is now FFL’s chief operating officer.

A dimly lit medical room, likely a utility room, featuring a gynecological examination table in the foreground. To the right, there is a utility cart with various medical supplies, including bottles and containers. The room has a plain wall with a mounted device and a coiled cord. The overall atmosphere is somber and clinical.

**Babies were being aborted
alive and shelved to die in
the soiled utility room.**



“I know you are feeling overwhelmed with sadness and pain and despair... but no single feeling lasts forever. An abortion will.”

PREGNANT BY THE MAN YOU LOVE or A RAPIST?

Victory Over Violence

Joyce McCauley-Benner

Like many college students, I wanted to move away from home and experience life on my own. I chose to move 1,100 miles away and I ended up working two jobs and surviving on financial aid to support this dream.

One of my jobs was at a restaurant.

A cook in the restaurant started to show some favoritism towards me. The other servers were annoyed as my orders came out faster and better and my tips increased. I didn't think much of it, until I was pushed inside a freezer and the cook made sexual advances towards me. No matter the number of times I broke free, it happened again.

Later that night, he raped me.

For the next several weeks, I tried just to keep my life barely intact and my classes at a passing level. About two months later I went to my on-campus health center for a check up. I asked the nurse if I was pregnant. She assured me I wasn't and kept telling me the test would be negative. I wanted to believe in her confidence, but I had this nagging feeling that I was pregnant.

Five minutes passed.

The clock ticked mercilessly, as I thought: "I don't know how to take care of a baby! I'm not ready to be a mother, I don't have medical coverage. I can't do this now!" The nurse came back in a state of quiet shock and placed the positive test in front of me. I begged her to tell me what to do. She told me to take a prenatal vitamin, find a doctor, and be on my way. That was it.

I walked out in a daze. Was the cook this baby's dad? Some jerk who hurt me, for fun, in spiteful laughter, as he, when he was done, said "see ya round, bitch"? Could that moment, in all its ugliness, possibly have fostered a child?

Or did this baby belong to me and to my boyfriend, whom I loved deeply, who had been with me in loving times and fun-filled moments?

I had to wait until the birth to know.

Despair came in fast and furious. Either way seemed a dead end. Surely, either way was hard. Did I think about abortion? Sure. I wanted so badly for the pain to go away, the unknowing, but even abortion wouldn't put the question of paternity to an end.

And I still didn't know what to do. I was in a new town, no family, few friends close by, no health insurance and not a clue how to take care of myself during pregnancy.

One day, during a desperate call to a friend from home, I went over my so-called choices. She made a comment to me, "I know you are feeling overwhelmed with sadness and pain and despair right now, but just know, no single feeling lasts forever. An abortion will." That hit me like a ton of bricks.

Upon deeper reflection, I realized that while **I did not know who the father of my baby was yet, I did know who his mother was. And that was me.** There was as much of me inside this baby as there was the rapist, or my boyfriend. How could I allow yet another piece of me to be taken away?

I didn't have much. But I had enough.

So I moved back home and had my baby boy. My boyfriend didn't sign the paternity papers at the birth because he still didn't know if he was the father and his friends and family encouraged him not to. It would take three months to learn who the dad was. But it didn't matter to me any more, at least not as much. In Joshua McCauley's eyes and tender hands I saw that part of me, fragile, needing love and support, but also full of life.

To learn later that women like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton celebrated motherhood as a part of womanhood was very empowering. I was not going to be transformed from a woman to a mother, but rather my womanhood experience was expanding, enhanced by motherhood.

When I chose single motherhood, it was hard. Finding resources and returning to my hometown college were challenging. But I persevered through it all and tapped into a strength within myself I never knew I had. We, as women, can sell ourselves short sometimes. Some parts of society will tell us we can't do it, we shouldn't do it, or force us to choose between our dreams as women and our desires as mothers. But I am here to tell you, **women deserve better® choices than that.** ♦

Editor's Note: Feminists for Life of America was the only pro-life organization to actively support the Violence Against Women Act.





Standing tough when
both sides reject your choice.

*Julia
Thornton*

EMPOWERED BY CHOICE

When a woman is facing an unplanned pregnancy, her options may seem few. Afraid, sometimes alone, and often confused, she faces significant challenges: If she tells her parents, will they throw her out of the house? Will her boyfriend leave her? Will she have to drop out of school? Will her community reject her? Will they judge and ridicule her? These questions are what run through a woman's mind when facing this situation. **I know because it happened to me 14 years ago.**

At the beginning of the second semester of my freshman year, I discovered I was pregnant. I was devastated. I went to the student-counseling center to try to make sense of my situation, and scheduled an appointment with a therapist. After listening to the circumstances leading up to and surrounding my pregnancy, my counselor recommended abortion as the solution to my problem. I remember her rationale being very sound, and although it was ultimately unconvincing, she made a pretty compelling pitch. She pointed out the many disadvantages to continuing my pregnancy, such as the effect it would have on my family and my academic career.

I left the appointment feeling frustrated. I wanted to explore all my options, and, in my opinion, my counselor gave advice far too prematurely. At that point I felt I had no recourse. I didn't know where else on campus to go. I had extreme morning sickness and began missing classes. I fell behind in my studies and the stress of my situation, both physically and emotionally, bore heavily upon me. I shared a 400-square-foot dorm room with two women who, like most freshmen students, stayed up late and frequently had guests in the room. The situation was untenable, and the lack of privacy took its toll. I was unable to get the rest pregnant women need, especially those with difficult pregnancies such as mine.

Having decided to carry my pregnancy to term, I felt the only choice I had was to drop out of school and move back home. I was unable to get a full refund for the semester, and lost \$10,000 in the process. I left my friends, my school and my academic career because I didn't have the support necessary to continue my studies. It was a tremendous price to pay for making the choice I made. It is a price I don't ever want another woman to pay simply because she chooses to continue her unexpected pregnancy.

According to the Guttmacher Institute, Planned Parenthood's research arm, **10% of all college-age women become pregnant each year.** One of every five abortions is performed on a college woman. And over 70% of college-age women surveyed who have had an abortion cited their fear that having a child would interfere with their education or career. So what can be done to create an environment in which women feel as if there are legitimate choices when facing an unplanned pregnancy?

Feminists for Life's College Outreach Program has challenged universities across the country to provide the resources necessary for women on their campuses who choose to carry an unplanned pregnancy to term. We call upon them to:

- 1. Provide assistance** in locating and utilizing childcare;
- 2. Provide maternity coverage** in student health care plans;
- 3. Increase the availability of family housing** on college campuses;
- 4. Create flexible academic scheduling**, such as telecommuting programs;
- 5. Increase financial aid**, especially for women living independently from their parents.

When I went to speak with my college counselor, I was not referred to a pregnancy resource organization that provided information on the housing, medical and legal issues I was facing. **"Get an abortion,"** I was told.

What more information could you want?

If we as a nation don't try to lessen their burden, then more young women will feel as if they are left with no choice but to either terminate their pregnancy or drop out of school. This is a moral and social failure we can no longer ignore.

Choosing to place my daughter for adoption was the most difficult decision I will ever make, but it was the right one. She is a happy and healthy little girl who loves school, her family and, for better or worse, all things French. Her dog is named Paris, and her mother recently redesigned her bedroom in Parisian pink with a giant mural of the Eiffel Tower. She is a loved little girl, and I derive great joy knowing that she lives such a full and rich life. We talk frequently, and I dream of one day taking a trip to Paris together, hopefully sometime during the spring.

The path I took was difficult. But I shudder to think of life without her. When I made the decision 14 years ago, people asked, "Why ruin your life? Why squander all the privileges and advantages you have just because of one mistake?" Well, let me tell you, the greatest privilege I've ever had in my life has nothing to do with my education, world travel or professional experiences.

The greatest privilege I have ever known is giving life to a beautiful, compassionate and curious little girl who would never have been in this world had I followed everyone's advice. ♦

Julia Thornton is the chair of the FFL board of directors.

"When I made the decision I made
14 years ago, people asked,
'Why ruin your life?'"

"The **greatest privilege**
I have ever known is giving life
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would never have been in
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a trip to Paris together."

ABORTION: A BETRAYAL OF FEMINISM

Karen Shablin

My story is very simple.

Until 10 years ago, I was a card-carrying member of NARAL. I believed:

- Abortion was tragic but rare, and without the option of abortion women couldn't make it in the workplace, because an unplanned pregnancy can derail one's career.
- Abortion was just a medical procedure like removing your appendix and no one was harmed. After all, if it was legal, it must be right.

I was even misguided enough to have chosen abortion at one point in my life.

I am now a member of Feminists for Life, which opposes abortion, and I continue my strong support for women's rights in the workplace and beyond.

What changed me?

As the acting Medicaid Director for the state of New Jersey, I was in charge of overseeing our public assistance program as it implemented a family cap. Family cap means that if you have additional children on public assistance, your financial grant will not automatically increase. I learned much later this was opposed by Feminists for Life because of its potential to drive women to abortion. But at the time, all I knew was that New Jersey covered elective abortions—and that was something I supported.

But when I saw the Medicaid abortion report that we were required to generate annually, I was heartbroken. There were women who had as many as four abortions during that 12-month period, and the report went on for a number of pages.

I had bought the lie that abortion was so abhorrent that no one would have more than one. If that information from the pro-choice side was false, what else was wrong? As I did more research into fetal development, I learned that life starts at

conception. I realized that I had committed a grave wrong. I decided that I would make sure that others knew what I had learned. I can't undo my mistakes over the years—having an abortion, advocating abortion—but I can help others to learn from my mistakes.

I am now a teacher on a college campus, a health policy expert in private industry, and a happily married wife and step-mother. I share my beliefs and experience with my students, my friends and co-workers. **Every life counts.**

My decision to have an abortion in my twenties, in retrospect, was an effort to protect everything I had worked for: my education, my career, my social success, my lifestyle. I told no one but my roommate and the father.

I also wanted to avoid finding myself lumped into a common stereotype of Black women as single mothers. I did not want to become, nor want my child to become, just another statistic. And, knowing my child would not be “a healthy, white baby,” I accepted the assumption that there would be “no demand” for my child: effectively reducing my child and me to mere commodities, opportunities. I underestimated myself, my family, and my friends, and society's ability to provide a place for my child. I made my decision in the moment, not thinking about my life 10 or 20 or 25 years later.

So I never even considered options other than abortion—I felt like it was the only choice.

It is a decision that I have lived with ever since. ♦

“If that information from the pro-choice side was false, what else was wrong? As I did more research into fetal development, I learned that life starts at conception. I realized that I had committed a grave wrong. I decided that I would make sure that others knew what I had learned.”



“I can’t undo my mistakes over the years — having an abortion, advocating abortion — but I can help others to learn from my mistakes.”

Did I Deserve the Death Penalty?

Angelica Rosales



I have often heard that children spared from abortion are called to be advocates for life. I speak from experience as a living example.

My mother suffered from an aggressive form of heart disease at the time she became pregnant with me, her fourth child, at the age of 42. When the doctor gave my mother the news, he told her continuing the pregnancy (me!) could kill her. Further, he said, ***“At your age and with your medical condition, the chances of carrying a ‘normal’ baby to term are slim. It’s not worth the risk.”***

My mother went home that afternoon in tears, worrying about how to break the news to her family. Her own mother said, ***“You’re pregnant! How could you be so irresponsible?”*** In spite of the doctor’s professional opinion, and advice from those around her, my mother chose to carry to term.

“As women, we need to love and empower each other and ourselves.”

A week before she was due, she was lying in bed and told my father, **“Honey, I know that everything is going to be okay, but if you’re faced with having to make a choice between me and the baby, I want you to have this baby.”** With tears in his eyes, my father said, “But I can’t raise three kids on my own.” My mother calmly grabbed his hand, smiled, and said, “Honey, you’re not going to be raising three kids on your own, you’re going to be raising four. It’s going to be okay.” If my mother had chosen to abort, she never would have known that she was going to give birth to a healthy baby girl or be able to relate this happy memory 30 years later.

Though I knew the circumstance surrounding my mother’s “unplanned” pregnancy, it wasn’t until I was faced with a woman contemplating abortion as a volunteer at a pregnancy resource center that I felt we have failed women terribly if the only “choice” we can offer women in crisis pregnancies is abortion. As Feminists for Life of America Honorary Chair Patricia Heaton notes, **“Women who are experiencing an unplanned pregnancy also deserve unplanned joy”** — just like my mother.

The circumstances and good fortune of my birth — that my mother risked her life to give me life — empower me in my work as the founder and executive director of a pregnancy center in Texas.

I began the organization at the age of 24 and it took me exactly a year and three months to raise enough funds to open the doors. I have worked with many women contemplating abortion. In the six years that I have been working with women in unplanned pregnancies:

- **I have never heard** a woman say she believes abortion is a good choice.
- **I have never heard** a woman say she believes abortion is a healthy choice for her and her child.
- **I have never heard** a woman say she’s happy that she can choose abortion as an option.

I have heard:

- “I can’t support a child right now.”
- “This wasn’t part of my plan; I want to continue my education.”
- “How will I care for this child while continuing my career?”
- “I’m just not ready to be a mother.”

Why don’t women have the resources, educational opportunities, emotional support and job security available to pursue their goals so they’re not forced to make one of the hardest choices they will have to live with for the rest of their lives? Even when a woman says to me “I have a right to choose,” if a woman chooses to have an abortion because she has no other options, we have failed her. Does having only one option, the option of abortion, represent true choice for a woman? Most women do not have abortions as a matter of “choice” but because they feel they have no resources to support a different choice. A coerced decision is not a free choice — it’s a last resort.

Statistics from the Guttmacher Institute, Planned Parenthood’s research arm, show that there are reasons, often financial or emotional, why a woman feels she must have an abortion. As women, we need to love and empower each other and ourselves.

Abortion has hurt women by diverting feminist attention from other issues, particularly those that help mothers, such as prenatal care, maternity coverage, affordable childcare and a living wage.

Abortion is a reflection that we have not met the needs of women. We need to systematically work to eliminate the root causes of abortion — which are lack of practical resources and support. I refuse to give up on women, because **women deserve better than abortion.** ♦

“My mother risked her life to give me my life.”



Angelica with her family on her 30th birthday. Her parents are standing behind her to the right.

A DETOUR, NOT A DEAD-END

Ann Lowrey Forster



Ada sat on Ann Lowrey's lap as she read philosophy treatises for her philosophy of law class.

On a Monday afternoon in October of my sophomore year of college, I went to Wal-Mart and bought a pregnancy test. Thirty minutes later, I found out I was pregnant.

I was all of the things you'd imagine I would be.

Shocked: I had been on the Pill.

Terrified: I was 19, living in a dorm room.

I felt so **unsure**.

I went to my boyfriend and told him and he was also shocked—we'd done what we thought would prevent this—and dismayed—he was also a sophomore in college, and like me, loving the luxuries of lots of free time and not a lot of responsibility. He hugged me and told me we'd figure it out, and drove me to Taco Bell for a bean burrito.

We went to the doctor, who did an ultrasound, which confirmed that I was six weeks pregnant, and gave us a glimpse of a little beating heart. We then drove the 2½ hours to his parents' house. They were the "accepting ones"; the ones that we were sure would react with disappointment at the timing, but not with anger at our "irresponsible behavior."

But that was not what we got. His parents immediately jumped to the conclusion that abortion was the solution. To say I never considered abortion would be dishonest. Of course I did. It is portrayed as the quick fix. The solution that costs the least in time, money and responsibility. Of course I considered it.

But that's not what I had chosen. I felt betrayed, alone and angry. Especially angry that this boy who I loved, and who professed to love me, with whom I had been in a relationship for more than a year—this boy, in response to his family's position, adopted a new one. He said, "I love you, but this is a bad idea. **Make it go away or I will go away.**"

His mother, a proud feminist, warned me I would never succeed if I had a baby in college; that we needed to "terminate the pregnancy" so that her son and I could move into life as "unencumbered adults."

I told my parents—the ones we were convinced would not react well; the ones we were sure would react with judgment—but they responded with unconditional support. And a feeling of indignation rose up in me. "Can't succeed?" I thought, "Really? Have I not been raised to be and strived to be a strong woman? A capable woman? **Does this right to choose for which I have argued so vehemently mean I don't really have a choice?** Can't succeed? Really? Let's find out."

And so I did. I went to school full time until May and Ada was born June 17th. I lived in the dorm—I was comically huge, but I had a housing scholarship that I was not willing to give up. My professors embraced my choice—excusing me as I ran to the bathroom with morning sickness, laughing with me as it got harder and harder to squeeze into a desk, but also demanding my best effort on papers, in discussions. One professor said, "**You know, Ann Lowrey, if you are going to be a woman who succeeds professionally, a little old pregnancy cannot turn off your brain.**"

While I was pregnant, I competed on the mock trial team I had founded the year before. After Ada was born, I served two more terms as president of that organization. I wrote weekly opinion columns for the school paper. Ada sat in my lap as I read philosophy treatises for my philosophy of law class. I laughed a lot.

“Thirty minutes later, I found out I was pregnant. I had been on the Pill. I was 19, living in a dorm room. I felt so unsure.”

I was not able to do this because I am super woman—or because being a single mother and a full-time student at 20 is easy. **I was able to do it because of the support I received.** The mounds of emotional support and the financial resources provided by my academic scholarships and my family. These resources ensured that we never wanted for diapers or baby food or child care.

Patricia Heaton, two-time Emmy winner, honorary chair of Feminists For Life and Debra on “Everybody Loves Raymond,” who currently stars on “Back to You,” says, **“Women who are experiencing an unplanned pregnancy also deserve unplanned joy.”** I did not get to spend a semester in Vienna as I had planned. But I did graduate with honors, on time, with two majors, and I have the most wonderful little girl who, rather than ruining my life and preventing me from succeeding, has only created new challenges and ways in which I can succeed.

And along the way, I realized that while I never stopped being a feminist, I was now a pro-life feminist.

My best friend, Paul, and I married two years after Ada was born, two weeks before he and I both defended our senior theses—his on education and mine on the deliberate blocking by Planned Parenthood and NOW of any pro-life Supreme Court justice. He adopted Ada in June 2007. A few months after we married, Paul and I found ourselves expecting. Ada has a new baby brother, and I am more and more proud of my role as a mother.

If we work to ensure that the thousands of young women who find themselves pregnant in college every year have the resources Ada and I had, there can be unplanned joy. **Let’s do that together. ♦**



Ann Lowrey's husband Paul adopted Ada in June 2007.



Herstory

Worth Repeating

Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell

By Cat Clark

In 1849 Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell (1821-1910) became the first woman to receive a medical degree from an American medical school and in 1859 became the first woman on the British medical register. She was ardently anti-abortion and pro-woman, choosing to enter the field of medicine partly because she was repulsed that the term “female physician” was applied to abortionists.

Born in Bristol, England, Blackwell moved with her family to the United States at the age of 11. The Blackwell family was very active in the movements to abolish slavery and enfranchise women; Elizabeth’s sisters-in-law included suffragists Lucy Stone and Antoinette Brown Blackwell, and she was a friend to abolitionist novelist Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Initially repulsed by the idea, more than one event contributed to Blackwell’s entering the medical profession. “The idea of winning a doctor’s degree,” she wrote, “gradually assumed the aspect of a great moral struggle, and the moral fight possessed an immense attraction for me.”

The idea was suggested, for example, by a friend dying of cancer, who told her “If I could have been treated by a lady doctor, my worst sufferings would have been spared me” and recommended that Blackwell devote her intellect and love of study to the service of suffering women. “Why don’t you study medicine?” her friend asked.



Related concerns eventually convinced Blackwell. Struck by an article in the *New York Herald* about Madame Restell, a woman notorious for selling abortifacient medicines and performing surgical abortions, Blackwell wrote in her diary:

The gross perversion and destruction of motherhood by the abortionist filled me with indignation, and awakened active antagonism. That the honorable term “female physician” should be exclusively applied to those women who carried on this shocking trade seemed to me a horror. It was an utter degradation of what might and should become a noble position for women...I finally determined to do what I could do “to redeem the hells,” and especially the one form of hell thus forced upon my notice.

The fact that other people considered her medical education impossible only spurred Blackwell on. She read medical texts with physician friends and applied to several medical schools. She was eventually accepted by Geneva Medical College in New York in 1847; anecdotal evidence suggests that the male students may have voted in favor of her admission as a joke. Blackwell graduated at the top of her class.

After gaining more practical experience in clinics and studying midwifery in Paris and London, where she met Florence Nightingale, Blackwell returned to the United States, where in 1857 she incorporated her dispensary as the New York Infirmary for Women and Children with her sister Emily—America's second female physician—and their friend Dr. Marie Zakrzewska. The Infirmary was the first American hospital staffed by women, providing medical training and experience for women doctors as well as care for the poor. Blackwell later opened a women's medical college at the hospital, based on a plan developed with Nightingale.

In 1869, Blackwell returned to England permanently, where she established a private practice, helped organize the National Health Society, and became professor of gynecology at the London School of Medicine for Women. ♦

Cat Clark is past editor of The American Feminist® and author of FFL's 2007 Herstory of the Week™ e-tutorial.

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The author of this article is grateful for the research and assistance provided by Mary Krane Derr, co-editor with Rachel MacNair and Linda Naranjo-Huebl of *ProLife Feminism Yesterday & Today: Expanded Second Edition* (Xlibris, 2005). Their book is available through Feminists for Life's website at www.feministsforlife.org/covetable_stuff.

We Remember



Christin A. Gilbert 1986 - 2005

Christin A. Gilbert, a 19-year-old with Down syndrome, pregnant because of sexual abuse, died on January 13, 2005, due to systemic organ failure after a massive infection spread through her body following a late-term abortion, according to an autopsy report.

Gilbert had graduated the year before from the Special Education Program of Keller High School in Keller, Texas. While in high school, Gilbert served as batgirl for the girl's softball team. She had participated in the Special Olympics for 10 years and in 2003 won a gold medal for the softball throw.

"She was an extremely healthy 19-year-old girl who died totally because of an abortion," said Kathy Ostrowski, legislative director for Kansans for Life.

Gilbert's parents brought her to Women's Health Care Services, a facility notorious for late-term abortions run by Dr. George Tiller in Wichita, Kansas, on January 10, for an abortion in her 28th week of pregnancy. Her baby received a fatal digoxin injection to the heart and Gilbert was sent to a hotel. The following day, Gilbert was taken back to the clinic, where a D & C was performed, a procedure that scrapes the baby out of the uterus, and was given RU486. She was again sent back to her hotel but was brought back on January 12 where she was diagnosed with dehydration, given intravenous fluids and sent back to the hotel. She was vomiting and had periods of unconsciousness. Her family again brought her to the clinic on January 13, where she became "unresponsive," and a 911 call was placed by a clinic worker who pleaded with the dispatcher, "Please, please, please! No lights, no sirens!" according to a recording of the call on JusticeforChristin.com.

Upon arrival, the ambulance crew resuscitated Gilbert, whose heart had stopped and who was no longer breathing, and rushed her to the hospital where she died of sepsis and systemic organ failure despite the infusion of huge amounts of antibiotics. All the blood vessels in her reproductive organs were clotted, according to the autopsy report conducted by the Sedgewick, Kansas, Regional Forensic Center.

A grand jury failed to return any charges. The Kansas Board of Healing Arts also cleared Tiller of any responsibility. No one was prosecuted with the sexual abuse of Gilbert.

Sources: JusticeforChristin.com, Kansans for Life, LifeNews.com



Patricia Heaton

Patricia Heaton's Challenge to Members and Supporters:

While you may know me best as Debra, a wife and mother in "Everybody Loves Raymond," my new role in "Back to You" allows me to examine the life of a woman who experienced an unplanned pregnancy and became a mom.

Women who are experiencing an unplanned pregnancy also deserve unplanned joy.

In my real life, I am a wife and mother of four boys, and proud to serve other women and children as Feminists for Life's Honorary Chair.

Like you, I am inspired by the remarkable women who have stepped up to tell their powerful stories. They are demonstrating their commitment to reach women experiencing unplanned pregnancies by sharing FFL's message of hope, because *women deserve better* than abortion.

And I am so proud of members and supporters like you who have helped us make great strides for women and children by investing in Feminists for Life, in our work for our future leaders and for students who need us right now.

As we approach a solemn anniversary—the 35th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*—we need to make a major push to reach women at highest risk of abortion and expand our efforts to make a profound impact on the next generation of leaders.

If you are like me, there is no other cause that you are as passionate about.

Feminists for Life is the place where principle meets compassion in action.

We need to make that extra sacrifice and invest in an organization that has proven time after time to be worth it. We need to do it together. And we need to do it now.



Margaret Colin

It's up to each of us to do what we can. **So FFL's Honorary Co-Chair Margaret Colin and I are once again stepping up to match your year-end donation.**

Now, it's back to you.

If this is your first time supporting us, Margaret and I welcome you.

If you gave last year, I urge you to consider doubling your year-end support. Imagine giving twice as much for FFL, then imagine that times two!

Stretch to reach the next Feminist Giving Circle. Sponsor a speaker. Send a kit to campus. Help us revolutionize campuses across the country. Envision a better world, and make it happen. We can do this— together.

Because women deserve better,

Patricia Heaton
Honorary Chair

BACK TO YOU!

Monthly Donations Also Double Matched

A former FFL Board member and a member of the Elizabeth Cady Stanton Circle has challenged FFL members to begin or increase their electronic donations.

All monthly online donations and electronic fund transfer donations, either newly received or increased by December 31, 2007, will be double matched in the first month by this generous feminist.

Make a resolution to provide Feminists for Life with year-round support by beginning or increasing a monthly contribution through FFL's Electronic Fund Transfer.

Corporate Match

Many employers offer a corporate match program. Ask your company if they participate—and double your gift to FFL!

Electronic Fund Transfer Form

Help FFL Help Women and Children! Your monthly electronic donations provide essential support as FFL works to bring about positive change for women and children. To begin your monthly contributions, simply fill out the electronic transfer form and send it (along with a voided check) to FFL. It's that easy! Donations will be debited on the first business day of each month and will be put to work immediately by FFL. Your participation helps FFL continue the tradition of the early feminists— pro-woman and pro-life!

I want my bank to transfer monthly donations to Feminists for Life of America. My authorization to charge my account at my bank shall be the same as if I had personally signed a check to FFLA. This authorization shall remain in effect until I notify FFLA, or notify my bank in writing that I wish to end this agreement, and my bank or FFLA has had a reasonable time to act on it. A record of each charge will be included in my regular bank statements and will serve as my receipt.

\$ _____ Amount of monthly pledge (\$5 minimum).

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Please enclose a voided check from your account to show the bank's address and your account number.

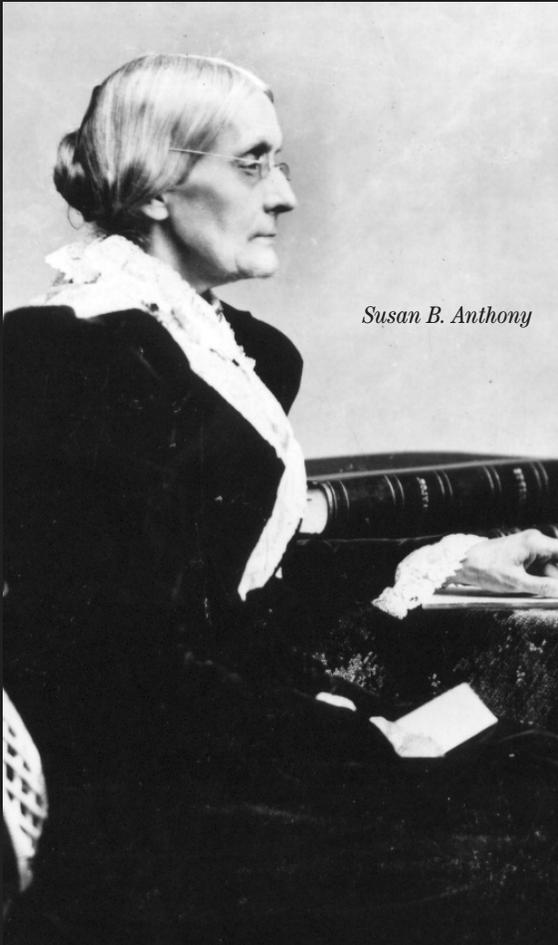
Send to: Feminists for Life of America
P.O. Box 320667, Alexandria, VA 22320.

Electronic fund transfers will begin immediately upon receipt.

Thank you!

Honor the legacy of our foremothers

by investing NOW in FFL



Susan B. Anthony

Feminists for Life of America recognizes that abortion is a reflection that our society has failed to meet the needs of women. We are dedicated to systematically eliminating the root causes that drive women to abortion—primarily lack of practical resources and support—through holistic, woman-centered solutions. Women deserve better than abortion.

Once again, your annual contributions will be recognized in a special way through FFL's Feminist Giving Circles.

Alice Paul Circle \$250

Author of the original Equal Rights Amendment in 1923, Paul told a colleague, "Abortion is the ultimate exploitation of women." Provide an activist kit of new "Say NO to the Status Quo™" materials for the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* and Women's History Month, and mentoring by FFL's College Outreach Program Coordinator.

Susan B. Anthony Circle \$500

Her publication, *The Revolution*, stated: "I deplore the horrible crime of child murder ... We want prevention, not merely punishment." *Send kits year-round, including "Grow Your Group" kit, "Say NO to the Status Quo™" kit, Women's History kit, monthly newsletters and support for a student leader.*

Elizabeth Cady Stanton Circle \$1,000-\$2,499

In an address delivered to the Judiciary Committee of the U.S. Congress on January 18, 1892, Elizabeth Cady Stanton said, "Nature never repeats herself, and the possibilities of one human soul will never be found in another. No one has ever found two blades of ribbon grass alike, and no one will never find two human beings alike." *Sponsor a speaker.**

Women's Suffrage Circle \$2,500-\$4,999

In a landmark victory for the nascent women's-rights movement, nationwide women's suffrage was guaranteed through the 19th constitutional amendment in

1920. *Sponsor real change for women through an FFL Pregnancy Resource Forum.**

The Revolution Circle \$5,000-\$9,999

Elizabeth Cady Stanton's and Susan B. Anthony's periodical gave voice to early feminist thought and documented the anti-abortion consensus among feminist leaders. *Revolutionize a campus with kits, lecture, ads and FFL Pregnancy Resource Forum.**

Seneca Falls Society Circle \$10,000+

The 1848 Seneca Falls Convention marked the beginning of organized feminism in the United States. *Complete the circle by sponsoring all of our speakers at one Roe Anniversary Event!*

Please contact FFL if you are interested in making a major investment in our upcoming efforts for women and children, or if you have frequent flyer or Amtrak® Guest Rewards to cover travel for a speaker!

**The size of a campus, amount of advertising needed, and travel costs can vary widely. Sponsorship for events includes support for student leaders before, during and after by FFL's staff. Because of their commitment to women and children, all FFL speakers donate their honoraria back to Feminists for Life.*

As we approach another New Year, please help FFL honor the memory and legacy of our feminist foremothers by continuing the work they began. Donors who contribute more than \$100 during 2008 through the Combined Federal Campaign or United Way local campaigns and wish to be recognized should contact FFL's national office immediately. Charitable agencies, including FFL, are not informed of individual giving amounts. Donors who prefer to remain anonymous should notify the national office immediately. *Thank you!*



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Surely you know someone who would relish the unique viewpoint of Feminists for Life. Gift memberships are \$25 (students \$15). Note recipient's name on the enclosed envelope. We will notify them of your thoughtfulness. (Sorry, no anonymous gifts.) Gift members receive a full year of *The American Feminist*.

Adoption is an
empowering
option for
women.™

My name is Jessica.

When I became pregnant, I knew I was not ready to be a mother.

Adoption was the best choice for my son—and for me.

It was hard, and I miss him, but I wouldn't change a thing.

I found strength I never knew I had.

Now, my son has the life I would have wanted for him, but wasn't ready to give him.

I have pursued my career and life plans.

Say NO to the Status Quo™

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