



THE AMERICAN FEMINIST®

Feminists for Life of America

hard *cases* *exceptional* choices



Feminists for Life proudly shares the stories of **remarkable pro-life women.**®

Increase Your Impact



The Guttmacher Institute reports that of the 1.21 million women who have abortions each year:

44% are college-age.

61% already have at least one child.

69% are economically disadvantaged.

75% say they cannot afford a child.

75% say that having a baby would interfere with work, school, or the ability to care for dependents.

Feminists for Life connects the dots between resources and life. Now more than ever, a contribution to FFL's holistic, woman-centered work is the most important investment you can make.

There are three easy ways to *multiply* your contribution.

1. Make a donation that will qualify for our year-end match, and your donation will be doubled!

2. If your employer matches donations, please include your corporate matching gift form with your contribution!

3. Make a new or increased monthly gift, and the first month will be double-matched!

November 1- December 31

(If you give \$10, FFL will receive another \$20 right away. If you give \$50 FFL will receive an additional \$100 for our work!)

Thank you!

hard *cases* *exceptional* **choices**

We are not defined by what happens to us when our life plans are derailed.

Every one of us faces unexpected detours. It is what we choose to do that defines who we really are.

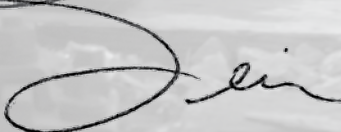
What are the principles that guide us when we are terrified by the acts of another or devastated by loss?

As I travel the country by train to speak to our future leaders on campus, their main concerns are about the most dire circumstances: What about abortion in the cases of rape, statutory rape, or incest? What should women do when their lives are at risk because of a pregnancy? Why bring a child into this world when parents are told the unborn child will be disabled, especially if this child will present a burden to others or have no chance at a meaningful life? And, aren't you condemning women to back-alley abortions?

When you **meet violence with nonviolence** and **protect the most vulnerable** while you **stand up for yourself**, you **become the very definition of courage**.

As we answer life's toughest questions, prepare to meet some **remarkable pro-life women**[®] who resolved to answer catastrophic circumstances with strength.

Because women deserve better,



Serrin M. Foster
President

Editor-in-Chief/President

Serrin M. Foster

Editor

Jewels Green

Editorial Board

Jewels Green, Joyce McCauley-Benner, and Sally A. Winn

Copy Editors

Donna Hayden Foster, Caroline Jarboe, Coleen MacKay, Krista Cornish-Scott, and Sharon Serratore

Art Director

Lisa Toscani

Design/Layout - Interior & Covers

Sally A. Winn

Board of Directors*Chair* Patrick A. O'Kane*Vice Chair* Cindy P. Brown*Secretary* Michael A. Sciscenti*Treasurer* Michael A. McNamara*Members-at-Large* Susan Zeigler, Nina Jurewicz,

Paula Carole & Kathleen Gannon Martino

President Serrin M. Foster**Feminists for Life of America**

P.O. Box 320667, Alexandria, VA 22320

www.feministsforlife.org

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.

The opinions expressed in *The American Feminist* by individual authors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policies, views, or beliefs of FFL's Board of Directors, President, or *The American Feminist* editorial staff.

Copyright 2012. All rights reserved.
ISSN 1532-6861

“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

FEMINISTS FOR LIFE OF AMERICA



Contents

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3 | Hard Cases & Exceptional Choices
<i>Serrin M. Foster</i> | 16 | Incest and the Abortion Clinic |
| 5 | Editor's Introduction
<i>Jewels Green</i> | 18 | Kristi Hofferber |
| 6 | What about rape?
<i>Serrin M. Foster</i> | 19 | What about “the life of the mother?”
What about “the life of the child?”
(The Jeannie French Story)
<i>Serrin M. Foster</i> |
| 8 | Analyn Megison | 20 | Angelica Talavera |
| 9 | Heather Gemmen Wilson | 23 | What if the fetus is or could be disabled?
<i>Serrin M. Foster</i> |
| 10 | Joyce McCauley-Benner | 24 | Diane Simoni |
| 12 | Anonymous | 25 | Lourdes Hnath |
| 13 | Juda Myers | 26 | Tracy Haugen |
| 14 | Rebecca Kiessling | 28 | Aren't you condemning women
to back-alley abortions?
<i>Serrin M. Foster</i> |
| 15 | Julia Schoch | | |



Jewels Green
Editor

I am honored and humbled by the opportunity to join Feminists for Life as Editor of *The American Feminist*.

As a woman who had an abortion and who also worked in the abortion industry for years, I may seem an unlikely choice for this position, but FFL was the first pro-life organization I joined after becoming pro-life just two years ago. FFL's mission to eliminate the root causes that lead women to abortion resonated with me, and I have been volunteering for this organization for more than a year.

The pages of this issue of *The American Feminist* are filled with heartbreaking, courageous, life-affirming stories. These brave women inspire me to even deeper dedication to creating a world where resources are available to pregnant mothers, all life is respected regardless of the circumstances surrounding conception, and abortion is unthinkable.

Because women deserve better,



Jewels Green

Feminists for Life is a nonsectarian, nonpartisan organization that advocates practical resources and support to address the unmet needs of pregnant women and parents. These stories appear in each writer's own words, and the opinions of the authors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policy of the board or staff of Feminists for Life.

Please be advised that this issue of *The American Feminist* addresses issues that may be difficult for our sensitive as well as younger readers. Some material in these articles may trigger disturbing memories for readers who have personally experienced violence similar to what is described.

In addition, please note that preconception issues are outside FFL's mission. Feminists for Life members and supporters hold a broad spectrum of opinions regarding preconception issues, and FFL welcomes anyone committed to working alongside us in our shared mission.

PRO-WOMAN ANSWERS TO

Q. What about **rape**?

A. Out of our desire to save someone from suffering, it is normal to wish we could erase a painful memory such as rape. Unfortunately, the hard truth is that as much as we want to, we can't. Abortion doesn't erase a memory.

Abortion is a second act of violence against a woman who is raped. At one of my lectures, a Vanderbilt medical student told other students that her "abortion was worse than the rape."

Both victims—the woman and her child—deserve our unconditional support.

Pregnancy is not a punishment. Julie Makimaa's mother ("Victory Over Violence," *The American Feminist*, vol. 5, no. 3) told her that she was the "only good thing to come out of the rape."

When someone asks about exceptions for rape and incest, we must think of how that makes those feel who were conceived through sexual assault. Well-meaning statements can hurt. As one Berkeley grad student said to her pro-choice peers, "I have a *right* to be here."

Can you imagine if we ranked the value of people based on the circumstances of their conception? We don't discriminate based on parentage—that's not equality! You are valuable no matter who your parents are, no matter the circumstances of your conception.

Could you look at someone conceived in violence and tell her she never should have been born? Rebecca Kiessling, a young attorney and mother who was conceived through sexual assault, asks, "Did I deserve the death penalty?" People used to value a woman based on who her father or husband was. It is similarly medieval to value a child by the actions of her father. That way of thinking is patriarchal and anti-feminist, and it should have gone out with the Dark Ages.

We need comprehensive support for rape victims who become pregnant. Did you know that in most states the

rapist still has paternal rights and even if convicted can demand visitation from jail? Did you know that if the rape victim is poor and can't prove the paternity of the father, she could have problems collecting welfare benefits? We should ask women who conceive through rape how to help them in the long term, and help their children as well.

Abortion after rape is misdirected anger. It doesn't punish the perpetrator of the crime. Incarcerated sexual offenders should not be allowed pornography, barbells, and early parole. We need harsh sentences for sexual assault without possibility of parole.

Q. What if she is a teen? What if she became pregnant due to **incest**?

A. Nonviolence, nondiscrimination, and justice for all are basic tenets of feminism. So what is the feminist response, the nonviolent response, to a violent situation? We must do all we can to protect ourselves and other women and girls from violence.

The best answer I ever heard came from a young woman who didn't consider this as a matter of philosophy or theory, but through feminist principles in action.

After my lecture at a Midwestern university, a student pulled me aside. She told me that she was raped by her third cousin as a mere thirteen-year-old and had become pregnant. Her parents had helped her have the privacy she wanted during her pregnancy, and then she placed her son with two loving parents.

I asked her, why did she make the decision to have the child—when she was just a girl who had lived through what was arguably the worst of circumstances? **She said she would never pass on the violence that was perpetrated against her to her own unborn child. Now that is the strength of a woman. That's a feminist response.**

Can you imagine if we ranked the **value** of people based on the circumstances of their **conception**?

PRO-CHOICE QUESTIONS

Q. What about statutory rape?

A. By definition, every rape is non-consensual. Every rape is forced. There are no exceptions.

Every rape is wrong. That includes sexual assaults committed by acquaintances and family members as well as by strangers, statutory rape of minors, sexual assaults committed by or against one or more persons, sexual assaults of men and boys as well as women and girls, rape by coercion, rape employing physical force, rape employing alcohol or drugs such as Rohypnol, and rape by sex traffickers and “johns” (both domestic and international).

Every rape, every abortion, and every instance of human trafficking betrays our feminist principles of nonviolence, nondiscrimination and justice for all. Feminists for Life opposes all forms of violence against women and children—including abortion and rape.

Feminists for Life demands an end to violence and discrimination in every circumstance, and will continue to support efforts that prevent violence against women through resources, support, and education. We also support prosecution of those who commit acts of violence against women and children.

Feminists for Life urges consistency in our laws, focus on prevention, and provision of support for those who have experienced various forms of violence.



Feminists for Life is a proud supporter of the Violence Against Women Act. Our priority is meeting the needs of women and children—and keeping women safe.

Through our work to prevent violence against women and pregnant women:

- FFL was the *only pro-life* group in the National Task Force on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence to work successfully for the Violence Against Women Act, which was passed in 1994.
- FFL was the *only feminist group* to support Laci and Conner’s Law, also known as the Unborn Victims of Violence Act. C-SPAN carried live coverage of FFL President Serrin Foster as she testified before Congress in support of this Act (see above). President Bush signed it into law in 2004.
- FFL published the “Forward Into Light” issue of *The American Feminist*[®] featuring forty pages of insightful articles examining coerced abortion, pornography, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, and intimate partner violence.
- FFL was a charter member of a coalition against sex trafficking. (1995)
- FFL has encouraged members to take personal action against human trafficking through articles and email list action alerts.



ANALYN MEGISON

something which can only be compared to a type of misogynist, medieval witch-hunt. Though according to the American Prosecutors Research Institute, 92-98% of rape allegations are true, there remains an expected villainization of a rape survivor who comes forward. (See the National District Attorneys Association website.) Therefore, it is sad to acknowledge, but not surprising, that there is an absence of legal protections for women who are mothers to these children and who choose to keep and raise them. Some states have no legal protections at all, but there are some that do. At this time, it remains unknown whether any national laws will be put in place to address women who are raising their children conceived from rape, and also for the children themselves. But that is my hope, because my child is absolutely worth it.

Love is stronger than fear. I became pregnant due to rape, and I chose to love and raise my child.

I thought that I had succeeded in fighting off my rapist despite the fact that my body was wracked with pain and there was blood. I remember the smell of my own blood in that struggle to fight him off like it was yesterday. Later, I learned that I had become pregnant from his attack. Many people pressured me to have an abortion because I was raped, though they called themselves pro-life. From the beginning I had to stand up to those people who would not respect my choice, because I wanted to love and raise my child, not be pushed into any forced adoption arrangement or starved into submission by any individual even as I willingly followed the direction of my physician to preserve and maintain my pregnancy. My child is absolutely worth every moment of this experience I am sharing with you.

Analyn Megison is the co-founder of Hope After Rape Conception whose mission is to assist rape survivor mothers and their children.



"Many people pressured me to have an abortion because I was raped, though they called themselves pro-life."

Love is stronger than ignorance. "Oh...but every time you look at your child...don't you think of being raped?" Despite this downright bizarre question I have repeatedly had to endure as a rape-survivor mother, the truth is that every time I look at my child I think of how grateful I am for this love in my heart and the joy of being a mother to someone so beloved to me who is just absolutely wonderful.

In most states in America, rape is the beginning and not the end of the battle. In particular, when women speak up about being raped, the treatment received is often





HEATHER GEMMEN WILSON

A stranger raped me in my home. I was asleep in my bed when he attacked me at knife point; and, to control me, he threatened the lives of my two children who were in the next room. Rape is as ugly as it sounds, and not a story anyone should tell.

I did tell, even though the man threatened to come back and kill me if I did. After he left me trembling and terrified, unsure of whether he was still in the house, I tore off the nylons he had used to restrain me. The kids were silent, and I didn't know if it was because they were sleeping or worse, and I had to get to them. I touched their sweet, sleeping faces, and then took the horrible risk of creeping downstairs to find the phone. My husband was at a meeting at church just a few blocks away. "Come home," I said, crying and shaking when someone put him on the line. "I've been raped." I could hardly say the words, and I can't imagine how it felt for him to hear them. He rushed home and found me cowering in a corner. But I had told, and then he told the police, and then we told our loved ones—and the slow process of healing began.

I became pregnant as a result of the rape; after much prayer and struggle, my husband and I chose to welcome the baby into our family. I can see now that God gave me my daughter as a constant reminder of His faithfulness. I have gained so much more than I have lost.

That was over sixteen years ago, and God has brought me to complete healing. Back then I wouldn't have believed I would one day write a book about my journey from rape to restoration—and that I would be glad to speak about it! I'm no longer ashamed to admit rape is a part of my life. **And if my restoration will give hope to even one other person, I'll tell it one more time.**



**I have gained so much
more than I have lost.**

Ms. Wilson is the author of the book, *Startling Beauty, My Journey from Rape to Restoration*.



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.

**I realized that while I did not
my baby was yet, I did know
And that was me.**

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?

know who the father of who his mother was.

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 anymore, at least not as much. In my son's tender eyes and 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, rather my experience of womanhood 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.**



@Feminists4Life

ANONYMOUS

Just a few weeks after receiving my acceptance letter to my first-choice graduate program, I discovered I was pregnant. My daughter was conceived by rape.

My boyfriend and I were having consensual sex. However, he took off the condom, and when I realized he did I told him to stop. I said, "Stop, get off me, you know I'm ovulating," and he grinned and continued. I couldn't get him off me. This was rape as well as a forced conception. He later said he was afraid I would leave him. We'd only been dating six months and I had repeatedly expressed that I didn't want more children. I have other children and an ex-husband who does not provide support or co-parenting. A local sexual assault group I contacted didn't think I had a chance prosecuting him with rape and discouraged me from taking legal action for the sake of my daughter—who could be labeled socially as a product of rape.

When I told a few people what happened no one had heard of this happening. Since then I have done some research and discovered rape and forced conceptions are not uncommon in abusive relationships. In the case of my rapist, there was no abuse in the relationship prior to this event. He became verbally abusive and threatening after I ended our relationship right after the rape.

I **never** considered abortion, for all life is sacred, but I had to deal with the fact that I had a pregnancy forced upon me and I would have no emotional or financial support to raise my child. I was committed to finishing my professional pursuits and did not want another child. Yet I loved all my children, and my heart grew to love this precious life within me. There has



There has never been a day when I associate the events of her conception with her as an individual.

never been a day when I associate the events of her conception with her as an individual. She is such a joy and I feel so blessed.

Yet our society is unkind to single-parent households in general. During my pregnancy, as well as afterward, I've had to deal with judgments and comments, such as:

"Why didn't you just have an abortion?"

"You are choosing to have the baby, stop acting like a victim."

"Did you know there was a serious population issue?"

"Do you know who the father is?"

"Are you going to get your tubes tied after this one?"

When people perceive abortion as a viable "choice" for all women, women are actually stigmatized for not "being practical" and making use of this "option". Thus the abortion issue places the focus—and the blame—on women vs. the society or the male parent who may be irresponsible, abusive, or, as in my case, a rapist.

I gave birth to my child and stayed on course with my goals. I am in the last year of my professional program. My daughter and her elder siblings are all unique, amazing children.

Editor's note:

The author has chosen anonymity for safety reasons. FFL respects her privacy.

JUDA MYERS

Imagine being a nanny and taking the night off. You're dropped off at the movies but your ride is drunk and can't pick you up. So you start walking to a home quite a distance away. It's late, around midnight, and you're walking as fast as possible. But not fast enough to escape eight young men on a street corner in St. Louis. That's what happened to my mother, Ann, in 1956.

My mother is my hero.

She finally made it home after being beaten and raped by each man. Not telling anyone, she packed her bags and headed back home to her parents. Three months later she learned she was pregnant

Being well aware she was carrying nothing less than a baby—*her* baby—Ann was determined to give birth. She was horrified to hear her doctor say, "I can take care of it for you," even when abortion wasn't legal. She stood her ground and informed him he would *not* "take care of it." As a result her mother refused to believe she'd been raped. Who could possibly want a child of a rapist? My grandmother wanted me dead. Like many women in similar circumstances, Ann was pressured to abort but refused.

My mother is my hero. She gave birth on Valentine's Day 1957, placing me for adoption. Secretly allowed to see me twice a day, she held and loved me for two weeks. At three months I was adopted by a couple who couldn't have children. Like most daughters, I became a "Daddy's girl." They always told the story of my dad seeing me for the first time. They wanted a boy, but when my Dad saw me he immediately took me into his arms and refused to give me back. A WWII veteran who watched the flag raised at Iwo Jima, Daddy was my personal hero, too.

I was wanted, loved, and given the gift of three loving parents thanks to a woman who understood the gift of life. In 2005 our eyes met again and she told me her story. As I wept for her she patted my shoulder and said, "Honey, stop your crying. I've forgiven those men, and look what God has done. He's brought you back to me." She had prayed for 48 years for my return.

My adoptive parents are deceased and my birthmother's only other child died in 2010. So as mother and child we have only each other now. I've never met anyone who regrets giving life but I have met many who regret taking it. I am forever grateful.



Juda Myers heads the nonprofit organization CHOICES4LIFE whose mission is to educate society about the worth of every human life and to restore respect to women who chose life after conceiving in rape. She believes that, "Women are strong enough to love their children even in cases of rape."

Stay Informed.

Feminists for Life emails are the best way to receive invitations to upcoming events, news updates, action ideas, insightful articles, and groundbreaking e-tutorials.

Even if you are a longtime subscriber to Feminists for Life's emails, it is essential to confirm that your subscription is current.

If you want to *begin receiving OR continue receiving* emails from FFL, please visit www.feministsforlife.org/taf/register.htm, enter your email address, and click "Subscribe." Follow the instructions to confirm.

You may also **text FFL to 22828** now to sign up!



REBECCA KIESSLING

Rebecca with her birthmother.

At 18, I learned that I was conceived out of a brutal rape at knife-point by a serial rapist.

I was adopted nearly from birth and raised in a Jewish family. At 18, I learned that I was conceived out of a brutal rape at knife-point by a serial rapist. Like most people, I'd never considered that abortion applied to my life, but once I received this information, all of a sudden I realized that, not only does it apply to my life, but it has to do with my very existence. It was as if I could hear the echoes of all those people who, with the most sympathetic of tones, would say, "Well, except in cases of rape. . .," or who would rather fervently exclaim in disgust: "Especially in cases of rape!!!" All these people are out there who don't even know me, but are standing in judgment of my life, so quick to dismiss it just because of how I was conceived. I felt like I was now going to have to justify my own existence, that I would have to prove myself to the world that I shouldn't have been aborted and that I was worthy of living. I also remember feeling like garbage because of people who would say that my life was like garbage—that I was disposable.

Although my birthmother was thrilled to meet me, she did tell me that she actually went to two back-alley abortionists and I was almost aborted. After the rape, the police referred her to a counselor who basically told her that abortion was the thing to do. She said there were no pregnancy resource centers back then, but my birthmother assured me that if there had been, she would have gone if at least for a little more guidance. The rape counselor is the one who set her up with the back-alley abortionists. The back-alley conditions and the fact that it was illegal caused her to back out.

Most people's position on abortion in cases of rape is based upon faulty premises: 1) the rape victim would want an abortion, 2) she'd be better off with an abortion, and 3) that child's life just isn't worth having to put her through the burden of carrying her pregnancy to term. I hope that my story will be able to help dispel that last myth.

The Feminists for Life ad in which I appear, "Did I Deserve the Death Penalty," was featured as a large display at an event at UC Berkeley where I was scheduled to speak. I was told that a man stopped and looked at it for a long time then said, "I think you just changed my mind."

In December 2011, I was fortunate enough to speak directly to Texas Governor Rick Perry who was then a candidate for the Republican nomination for president of the United States, and I reminded him that, according to the Supreme Court, the rapist didn't even deserve the death penalty. After speaking with me he changed his mind and instantly became 100% pro-life, with no exceptions. If you can change the heart of a governor, during a presidential campaign, then you can change the heart of anyone. Don't just make this out to be a philosophical discussion, but put faces and stories to the issue because that's what pierces the heart.

Most importantly, I've learned that your value is not based on the circumstances of your conception, your parents, your siblings, your mate, your house, your clothes, your looks, your IQ, your grades, your scores, your money, your occupation, your successes or failures, or your abilities and disabilities. **The truth is that you don't have to prove your worth to anyone. Every life is valuable.**

Rebecca Kiessling is a family law attorney, public speaker, and Director of the nonprofit organization "Save the 1" whose mission is to save the 1%—the "hard cases" where pregnancy is the result of rape or incest—by removing exceptions from the law, ensuring that all unborn children are legally protected, and by educating the public on the worth of every human being, regardless of the circumstances of his or her conception.

JULIA SCHOCH

Some women who become pregnant after being raped are coerced or pressured to abort, or may feel an obligation to abort. My daughter whom I adopted was conceived in rape. Her birthmother was only 13 years old. She said she was told by the abortion clinic staff that “no one will want a biracial, rapist’s baby.” They refused to let her see the ultrasound picture and, although she was 20 weeks pregnant, told her that her baby wasn’t formed yet. They also told her that she was “too young” and would die if she tried to have the baby.

She gave in, believing she would die trying to have a baby no one would even want. The doctor began a second-trimester abortion under only local anesthesia. They never explained fetal development, the procedure, risks, options, etc. She was in so much pain that the doctor stopped and rescheduled the abortion, telling her mom to bring more money for general anesthesia because “she is making my job too difficult.” She then got accurate information and took a stand for her unborn daughter. Her attempted abortion was not a cavalier decision; she was only offered an uneducated and coerced “choice.” She believed the shame wasn’t in aborting, but that the shame would be in having a “rapist’s baby.” They made her feel like it was wrong and dangerous to even consider giving birth to a baby conceived in rape.

I was in the room when my daughter was born; the birthmother’s older sister was her labor coach. It was an amazing experience. The birthmother’s own mother, who

They made her
feel like it was
wrong and
dangerous
to even consider
giving birth to
a baby conceived
in **rape**.

initially wanted that baby aborted, instantly fell in love with this little girl. I honestly think people were expecting the baby to have horns or to be a mini-rapist. Yet out comes this fat-cheeked, curly-haired little thing with the prettiest green eyes—everyone was crying tears of joy! I went straight to the young birthmother and just held her and cried. I said, “You did it! You did it! She is here!” She replied, “Thank you! You were right. She is worth it.”

Never at any time was her unborn baby any less human, innocent, alive, and worthy of being treated with dignity and respect than a child conceived in a deliberate act of love. **She was and is a precious little girl who is loved and wanted regardless of the circumstances of her conception, her race, her status, or her abilities.** The abortion attempt left her with challenges she will face for the rest of her life. Her birthmother is also very much alive and we love her so much. She loves her daughter and getting to watch her growing up. The point is, the unborn are equally living humans regardless of how they were conceived. Abortion—all abortions—kill innocent humans. It isn’t like abortions on women who accidentally became pregnant kill babies, while abortions that “terminate a pregnancy” that is a result of rape somehow don’t kill an actual human baby. Either the unborn are living humans or they are not. And either all innocent humans are deserving of the right to life, or they are not. Personally, I refuse to accept discrimination against little ones like my daughter.

Julia Schoch is the Director of Respond to Life, a Christian pro-life organization dedicated to making abortion illegal.



Incest and the Abortion Clinic

Now that the “rape and incest” exceptions to laws against abortion are once again making headlines, my own experience sheds what I believe to be desperately needed light on the subject. I am a victim of child sexual abuse--both incest, and the family friend variety. I write this story in the hope that in the reading of it, both sides of this terrible debate will pause to think long and hard about their positions.

Just before I was 13 years old, I was sexually abused by an older brother, and by a college-age friend of the family. I was never assaulted by the two together, but each knew of the other’s involvement--the older brother gave me “tips” for sexual acts on the family friend.

About 3 or 4 months after the abuse began, I was late for a period. I told my brother this, and he informed me that I “should have made that guy wear a rubber, you idiot.” I did not know what a “rubber” was, or where it was worn, or why. All I knew was, that if you did not have periods, you were pregnant. And if you were pregnant, you were in trouble.

I turned to my Sunday school teacher for help. When I told her I thought I might be pregnant (at 12 years old) she didn’t even blink. She gave me a hug and said I should go to Planned Parenthood for a “rabbit test,” that I should get one of my older brothers to take me and not tell my parents. She never asked who the male partner was, or why I was sexually active at my age. So my older brother took me to Planned Parenthood.

I had never been to a doctor without my mother, and I had never had a gynecological exam. The whole visit was terrifying. No one explained anything. I was examined, gave urine and blood samples, and shown a chart of an egg going around a big circle marked by days of the month. I was asked questions like “frequency of intercourse?” and “method of birth control preferred?” I did not know what intercourse meant, so I just said “a lot,” and I had no idea what methods of birth control existed. No one asked who my “partner” was, no one expressed any dismay, concern, or even interest that a 12-year-old girl needed a pregnancy test.

(continued)

I heard a lot about “being responsible” and “taking control of my body.” Someone gave me a handful of condoms on the way out, and made a joke about it being an assortment—red, blue, and yellow. The yellow ones were called Tingleers. I stuffed them in my purse, and threw them away later.

My older brother maintained a strong silence throughout the entire time—no one asked him a single question.

Two days later I received a phone call telling me the test was positive, and to come in the following Saturday morning with a sanitary napkin and a friend who could drive. The caller never used the words “pregnant” or “abortion.” I did not keep that appointment; my period started that evening.

The sexual abuse ended a couple of months later, as the family friend moved away, and my older brother began to abuse two younger neighbor children instead.

It was not until 3 years later that I discovered, in a high school biology class, that you cannot get pregnant from oral sexual contact. I also found out what intercourse was, and that I’d never had it.

I remember the feeling of horror that came over me as I realized I had been scheduled for an abortion. I remember trying to figure out who would have paid the bill (it must have been my brother), and wondering why I was such a horrible person that those people thought I should have an abortion. Obviously, the worst thing that could ever happen to anyone must have happened to me, so what kind of person did that make me? Bad enough to have to kill a baby, according to what I had just learned in my biology class. I thank God that my period started when it did.

Over the years, I have found out that my story is very common in two aspects, neither of which will be good news for either side in the abortion debate. The first is the fact that my experience with Planned Parenthood was not an aberration. The sexual attitude often championed by Planned Parenthood is a serious factor in preventing the discovery of sexual abuse of young people. Had anyone shown even the least bit of disapproval or concern, I would have divulged the truth and begged for help. Everyone around me seemed to accept as normal that a 12-year-old girl could and should be sexually active (so long as she is responsible—remember that “rubber rainbow”!) And remember, too, who took me to Planned Parenthood—an older brother with an urgent interest in my having an abortion! Abortion on demand, no questions asked, makes

it easier for incest and child abuse to continue. Abortion for incest victims sounds compassionate, but in practice it is simply another violent and deceptive tool in the hand of the abuser.

The other unhappy aspect of this situation is that incest, rape, and child abuse are far more common than most pro-lifers want to admit. Pamphlets, speeches, and articles regularly claim that pregnancies from incest are so rare as to be negligible. My experience with other victims is that sexual abuse of children, incestuous and otherwise, is very real, very common, and terribly underreported.

Both sides in the abortion debate have a lot to learn. Abortion defenders need to realize that while abortion may keep one of the results of incest and sexual abuse from seeing the light of day, it does absolutely nothing to protect a young girl from continued abuse, and in fact aids the abuser in his crime. Furthermore, birth control counseling and abortion often indirectly contribute to the victim’s sense of shame, guilt, and blame for what is happening, since she is told to “take control” and “be responsible” for her “sexual activity,” implying that this situation is, indeed, within her power to control. On the other hand, pro-lifers need to realize that incest, rape, and child abuse do happen, and often with devastating results. In the assembly-line process of abortion on demand, incest-related abortions are seriously underreported.

Mary Jean Doe, whose real identity is protected, lives in a small Midwestern city with her husband and three children.

Reprinted from *SisterLife*, Fall 1990 and from *The American Feminist*, Winter 1997-1998.



KRISTI HOFFERBER

As an adoptee, placed three days after my birth, I grew up in a loving, Christian family. I have known about my adoption since I was a young girl. It was something my parents did not want me to be ashamed about. I attended a Christian school up to the fourth grade. This, along with church, became the foundation of faith that I would learn to depend on.

As an adolescent I began to struggle, emotionally and socially, with my adoption. I often had feelings of low self-worth and questioned my existence. The questions of where I came from and why I was placed for adoption began to consume me. High school was extremely difficult for me. I learned how to create a wall and turned my emotions inward. My ultimate fear was hurting my adoptive parents by questioning my adoption. They are wonderful parents. I just had a void that no one could seem to fill.

It was not until I was 30 years old I decided to ask the difficult questions surrounding my existence. I was finally at a point in my life that I could let down the wall that I had worked so hard to keep, and for so long. I also expressed an interest in searching for my biological mother. Once I asked the questions, I found I was very unprepared for what I would hear.

When I was 13, my parents had read an article in the local newspaper that included my biological mother's name. The article was in regard to my biological mother, and that she was prosecuting her father for sexual abuse over the previous twenty-plus years. It went on to state that there were six children conceived from the abuse. The first pregnancy was terminated due to physical abuse by my biological mother's father, the second was my birth and adoption,

and the four subsequent pregnancies were terminated through abortion to cover his actions. When I first learned this, I was shocked.

It took me about a week of reflecting on the information before I decided to pursue finding my biological mother. After only two days of searching, I located her. The main concern I had with moving forward in my search was bringing up more trauma in her life. Fortunately, she welcomed me into her life, and in turn, it brought her some sense of closure. She had been told that it was likely that I did not survive, due to an illness I had at birth.

Now my passion is to serve others who may be facing difficulties with any aspect of adoption. As my story reveals, God can take something bad and make it an opportunity to do something miraculous. **There is value in every human life.**



Since learning of her conception, Kristi Hofferber speaks publicly about her story and the value of all human life. She is working toward a degree in social work and plans to pursue an additional degree in adoption counseling.

I was very unprepared for what I would hear.



Q. What about "the life of the mother?"

A. Since we are both pro-woman and pro-life, we refuse to choose between women and children. Sometimes doctors advise abortion because they are unaware of other options or because they are pressured by fear of malpractice suits. We believe that physicians and other medical personnel should treat both patients and do what they can to save both lives. This is what was done before the Roe decision was handed down. Thankfully, medical advancements continue to save more lives.

Situations in which the pregnancy threatens the life of the mother are extremely rare. Late-term abortions are never medically necessary, despite the claims by some abortion advocates.

Emergency C-sections are often the

medically appropriate response to save both mother and child. Viability at this stage of the child's development is generally very good, especially with advances in neonatal care. Babies who weigh just under a pound are surviving and even thriving.

As for first-trimester scenarios, most are to save the mother from ectopic pregnancies. Since the child has no chance of survival, and the mother can survive if the pregnancy is ended, we must do what we can to save her. To let both die would not be pro-life. At this time uterine transplants to re-implant the baby into the womb are not possible. (But if this becomes a viable option, it would have enormous ramifications for the entire abortion debate, since becoming un-pregnant would not be the same as having an abortion!)

While pregnancy can be a stressful experience and sometimes bring on or exacerbate depression, psychological stress should not be "treated" by abortion. Psychiatrists and psychologists need to treat mental health issues directly.

Finally, more medical research must be dedicated to pregnant women who are faced with life-or-death situations, and alternatives must be found to drugs and other therapies that result in complications for the woman or child. In addition, ongoing education must be provided to physicians about alternative care. Meanwhile, we encourage physicians to adhere to the original Hippocratic Oath, which rejects abortion, and return to the treatment of both patients.



Q. What about "the life of the child?"

Jeannie Wallace French, executive director of the National Women's Coalition for Life provided a powerful personal story during the 1996 hearings before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee on the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban.

French described how physicians recommended aborting her twin daughter, Mary, after she was diagnosed as being anencephalic. (Anencephaly is a congenital defect where most of the brain and parts of the skull do not fully develop.) However, the Frenches were determined to do everything possible to save their daughter. And if they found they were unable to take care of her, they learned there were couples awaiting adoption. Mary lived just a few hours after birth. Her father had a chance to hold her. But that's not the end of Mary's story.

Jeannie testified, "Three days after Mary died, on the day of her interment at the cemetery, Paul and I were notified that Mary's heart valves were a match for two Chicago infants in critical condition. We have learned that even anencephalic and meningomyelocele children like our Mary can give life, sight, or strength to others. Her ability to save the lives of two other children proved to others that her life had value—far beyond what any of us could ever have imagined.

"Mary's life lasted a total of 37 weeks, 3 days, and 6 hours. In effect, like a small percentage of children conceived in our country every year, Mary was born dying. What can partial birth abortion possibly do for children like Mary? This procedure is intended to hasten a dying baby's death. We do not need to help a dying child die. Not one moment of grief is circumvented by this procedure."

"Our daughter, living less than a day, saved the lives of two other children. Which of us, even after decades of living, can make the same claim?" Jeannie asked.

DID I *deserve*
THE DEATH
PENALTY?

I am that "exception."

Question Abortion®



ANGELICA TALAVERA



 **refuse to choose**
Women Deserve Better
than Abortion
FEMINISTS FOR LIFE.org

In spite of the doctor's professional opinion, and advice from those around her, my mother chose to carry to term.

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.

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. 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 former research arm, show that there are reasons, most

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^o than abortion.



Angelica is now married and raising two young children of her own. She also speaks on behalf of FFL. A short version **"I AM that Exception"** is available on FFL's YouTube channel. www.youtube.com/FeministsForLife



Live the Legacy.
Leave a Legacy.

Stand up for future generations of women. We who refuse to choose between women and children live the legacy of Susan B. Anthony and other early American feminists.

Please consider leaving a legacy by including Feminists for Life of America as a beneficiary of your estate so that our work may continue. Let us know so that we may properly acknowledge your gift.

Thank you!

Monthly Donors Provide Essential Support

Help FFL help women and children! Your monthly donations provide core support as FFL works to bring about positive, holistic change. To begin your monthly tax-deductible contributions, visit www.feministsforlife.org/support or fill out the electronic transfer form below and send it (along with a voided check) to FFL. 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 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 my bank in writing that I wish to end this agreement and FFLA or my bank has had a reasonable amount of time to act on my request. 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) Signature _____ Date _____

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone (Day) _____ (Eve) _____

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
PO Box 320667, Alexandria, VA 22320

Electronic fund transfers will begin immediately upon receipt.

Thank you!

TAF10-12

Q. Disability - what if the fetus is or could be disabled?

A. It is natural to want to “save from suffering the unborn innocent” as was written in Susan B. Anthony’s *The Revolution*.

If actual or potential disability is a reason to devalue children before birth, what cruel message does this send to persons with disabilities who are already born?

Would you say to someone in a wheelchair that s/he should never have been born? That’s the message people get when they talk about “gross fetal anomalies.”

How many artists, musicians, writers with disabilities or no-fault brain disease have enriched our world? Would artist Toulouse-Lautrec’s paintings have had a bigger impact if he were taller in stature? What would our world be like without the contributions of artist Van Gogh, musician Beethoven, or writer Sylvia Plath?

People who overcome adversities challenge and enrich our world.

Sadly, persons with disabilities have often been devalued as women once were. But through the Americans with Disabilities Act, we demonstrated our commitment to those with disabilities.

There is another message sent to mothers by well-meaning people—especially those in health care—that mothers should spare themselves and the world from those with special needs.

Imagine the anguish of the more than 400 women in Great Britain who aborted after hearing their child would be developmentally disabled, only to learn afterward that they had aborted perfectly healthy children.



And imagine what those women have lost who aborted their specially-gifted children on the advice of well-meaning doctors, family, and friends. The strongest hug I’ve ever felt in my life was a gift from a child my mother taught in special education.

Just as we desire to spare those children who are severely disabled, it is also natural for us to want to spare the parents suffering. But the children my mother taught in special education, and the contributions that my mother and sister—both now disabled—make in this world, reveal that we never know the way the story will end, or what could have been if we refuse to end a life prematurely.

I hope you will join Feminists for Life now to advocate the unmet needs of pregnant women, parents and children—born and unborn—including those who enrich our lives through their special needs.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeannie".

DIANE SIMONI



In 1991, I was 23 and working in the Genetics Department at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. I was married, had a toddler, and was happily pregnant with my second child. What a gift it was that I was working in that department. Because of the knowledge and connections made there, I was in a much better state of mind to deal with what lay ahead.

At about 20 weeks gestation, an ultrasound picked up abnormalities in the infant I was carrying. Sadly, major brain and heart defects were noted.

The obstetrician and the head of the Genetics Department were direct with me about having amniocentesis, suggesting to me that if I knew what the chromosomal abnormality was, I would lean more toward abortion. They didn't know how firmly I stood behind my statement that I would not add "premature birth to the list of problems my daughter was already facing" by undergoing an abortion.

However, I did choose to have amniocentesis. There are many chromosomal abnormalities that can be detected by amniocentesis—not just Down syndrome. Some of them are "incompatible with life outside the womb." That was the case with my daughter. She had Trisomy 13 which is similar to Down syndrome (Trisomy 21) in that there is an entire extra chromosome. However, unlike Down syndrome, which has an array of associated clinical pictures, people with Trisomy 13 do not have an expected life span. Many die even before birth.

With the information I had from the amniocentesis, I was able to prepare for the birth of my child. I was able to read up on the problems she might have if she did survive until and after her birth. And, most importantly, I was able to meet with a priest who was a university ethicist to discuss which medical interventions should be considered when she was born. For example, CPR is a life-saving measure but in some instances, such as when someone is in the final stages of dying, CPR may not be chosen as a medical intervention. In my situation, with my daughter Gabrielle having a known chromosomal abnormality, I was prepared in the delivery room, should she not be able to breathe, to decline intubation, but to ask for resuscitation by means of breathing into her mouth/nose in infant CPR.

Gabrielle lived for 12 days and died in my arms at home. Hospice services were a wonderful resource as my husband and I learned to change her feeding tube and prepare for her death.

Over the years, my gratitude for being chosen to be Gabrielle's mother has changed and grown. I have gained ever-deepening understanding of the privileged position I am in for having her as a daughter. When well-meaning doctors and medical personnel try to influence women to abort their babies with major medical issues, the parents may give in to that pressure and miss out on the experience of getting to know that child. Parents should know that even babies with chromosomal abnormalities can find a home through adoption if they don't feel capable of parenting a child with special needs. Whether they choose adoption or take care of the child themselves, there are supports to help families in their situation. Parents should know about all of those resources before being put in the difficult position of considering abortion. With time taken to learn about resources, perhaps someday in the future they will look back and feel privileged to be that child's parent.



Diane Simoni is the proud mother of two grown children and works as a clinical social worker in private practice.

When well-meaning doctors and medical personnel try to influence women to abort their babies with major medical issues, the parents may give in to that pressure and miss out on the experience of getting to know that child

LOURDES HNATH

When I was 34, I found out my son was going to be born with major heart problems and Down syndrome. Doctors encouraged abortion, but since my family and I don't believe in this, it was not an option. However, I was terrified. How do I take care of a child with special needs? Will he even know me? We quickly educated ourselves about Down syndrome by reading, reading, reading. However, the books were starting to scare me until I realized: every child is different. He would not have all the obstacles listed in these books. We were truly going to have "on-the-job training." We were hooked up with one of the many organizations that help disabled children, so he was on waiting lists for all kinds of help even before he arrived. I was still scared. When he was born, I asked his doctor, "Now what do I do?" He said, "Take him home and love him." That is what we did. His heart was repaired at 3 months of age. Besides his disability, he was just a regular kid. He laughed, cried, discovered things he loves to do (swimming and dancing), and he is my life! He is very close to my entire family, and his older brother and younger sister are devoted to him. He is his own person. He sees things differently than most people (usually more logically), and he makes us

laugh every day. My baby is now 18 years old. He has been in school since he was four, and he is very proud of his job that he has through school. **Even though my life isn't what I planned, it is better because of my Joshua.**

No child is ever a mistake.


**No child
is EVER a
mistake.**



Lourdes Hnath (pictured with Joshua) is a church musician and a stay-at-home mother of two sons and a daughter.

PEACE begins

in the WOMB[®]

 FEMINISTS FOR LIFE

www.feministsforlife.org

Order your favorite FFL bumpersticker or other Covetable Stuff online at www.feministsforlife.org/covetable_stuff! 



TRACY HAUGEN

The day started with anticipation. It ended with voices ringing in our ears...“Your baby has a very serious heart defect. We are sorry but nothing can be done to fix it. If he makes it to term, he won’t live more than hours or a few days. We strongly suggest that you consider ending this pregnancy now so that you don’t prolong your suffering.”

My husband Dave and I had been at an appointment for a level two ultrasound, 19 weeks into our first pregnancy; a follow up to some funny results from a blood test, probably nothing to worry about.

The world was spinning, collapsing, everything had changed. Life before this day was over and now we were on a new journey...one with no easy road, no real way out.

I wish I could say the decision to continue, to carry this baby with “no hope” was automatic, but that isn’t the truth.

The truth is that I couldn’t imagine any of the options. Early induction was offered and seemed less like “termination” than a surgical abortion. Twenty-one more weeks of planning a birth and a funeral at the same time seemed impossibly painful. There was no way around the pain. I wanted out.

Then, thanks to a kind receptionist, I was connected to a woman who had been given similar news 2 years earlier and had chosen to continue her pregnancy. We spoke on the phone and I heard something that surprised me. Her story was one of love and grief, joy and pain. She spared no details, sharing every aspect of her journey. She didn’t make trite statements or

offer spiritual platitudes, but instead extended the hope that there can be beauty mixed with suffering.

The decision was made. I think that decision saved my life, not physically, but spiritually.

My doctor was so adamant I terminate that I had to ask if she would continue to be my doctor since I had chosen to carry to term. She agreed, but I could tell it scared her.

I continued to go about my daily life, going to work, to the grocery store. Every day was a choice to move and live. There were two other pregnant women who worked in the same dental office as I did. All three of us were expecting firstborn sons, all due within a 12-week period. I couldn’t avoid the truth; I embraced it and was honest with everyone who asked about the baby. Though I knew it made some people uncomfortable, I couldn’t pretend things were ok.



At 30 weeks, we had another ultrasound and there was a slight improvement in the appearance of our baby's heart. We saw a pediatric cardiologist who did his best to see our son's heart anatomy through my belly. The news was still grave, but a glimmer of hope existed. We would have to wait and see.

At 36 ½ weeks, a beautiful boy, Davis Eric, entered the world. I was able to hold him for a moment before the neonatal team whisked him away. My husband, Dave, followed and Davis' heart defect was officially diagnosed "Hypoplastic Left Heart Syndrome." A big name for a big problem. Only a few babies survived the 3-part surgery and the best hope was still "a lifetime of looking over your shoulder" as the neonatologist put it.

We had come to a peaceful place of surrender. He was ours for a season, however long, but ultimately he was the Lord's. We could choose the surgery knowing that our hope was not dependent on our son's survival.

Davis had surgery on the fifth day of his life. We had held him, loved him, parented him in the ways we could. He survived only a few short hours after surgery. The doctors had done their best, we had done our best, and it was time to let him go. The pain was the deepest ache I have ever experienced. I still feel it sometimes. But this pain does not bear any regrets, any second thoughts, any "if onlys." This pain doesn't consume me from the inside out.

We are blessed to now have two daughters, Anna and Grace, both healthy girls and we look back with gratitude and humility on our painful and wonderful journey.



Tracy volunteers her time working with young women through Young Life, a non-denominational Christian outreach organization for adolescents.



How will you be spending the anniversary of Roe?


Join us at the March for Life in Washington, DC or Walk for Life West Coast in San Francisco. Be sure to order some double-sided Feminists for Life placards and share our message.

Available for purchase online at:
www.feministsforlife.org/covetablestuff

Ask us about our special bulk rates.



See our event schedule page for more information
www.feministsforlife.org/cop/schedule.htm.



Q. Aren't you condemning women to back-alley abortions?

A. No one wants that. It isn't a choice between legal and illegal abortion.

Women need viable nonviolent choices—marital or single parenthood, kinship care, guardianship and various adoption options—with support that women want, need and deserve. Women deserve better and shouldn't settle for less.

Jein

Women deserve better and shouldn't settle for less.

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.*

Like Susan B. Anthony and other early American feminists, today's pro-life feminists envision a better world, where no woman would be driven by desperation to abortion.

If you have been wondering where you fit in, please consider this your invitation to

join Feminists for Life.

Become a member, renew your membership, or give the gift of membership today!

Membership is still \$25 for regular members and just \$15 for students.

Sign up now at www.feministsforlife.org/support.

Feminists for Life is a 501(c)3 organization. All membership contributions and donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

No one else addresses the issues like
FEMINISTS FOR LIFE.

No other magazine explores them like
THE AMERICAN FEMINIST.

Purchase back issues online at www.feministsforlife.org/covetable stuff.

Also order quantities of FFL's eye-catching brochures to distribute at your next event!

**You
Have
Better
Choices.™**



Every woman's right?
A fundamental freedom?

Or a reflection that we have
not met **the needs
of women?**

Voices of Our
Feminist Foremothers

refuse to choose
**Women Deserve Better
than Abortion**
FEMINISTS FOR LIFE.org

A collage of historical images. At the top, the text "Voices of Our Feminist Foremothers" is written in a cursive font. Below this are several small images: a portrait of a woman in a circular frame, a woman in a dark dress and hat, a woman in a white dress and hat, and a group of women in dark dresses and hats. The bottom half of the collage shows a large group of women in dark dresses and hats marching down a street, holding large white flags.

The Truth About Susan B. Anthony
Long Live Benazir Bhutto
Why I Am a Pro-Life Feminist

NEW Brochures:
Voices of Our Feminist Foremothers

THE AMERICAN FEMINIST®

Feminists for Life of America

MARCH
forth!

THE AMERICAN FEMINIST®

FEMINISTS FOR LIFE
OF AMERICA

Raising
Expectations
in the Workplace



THE AMERICAN FEMINIST®

Feminists for Life of America

Raising kids
on a
shoestring



YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A SUPERHERO.
HELP IS HERE!

THE AMERICAN FEMINIST®

Feminists for Life of America

Forward Into Light

Exposing violence.

Protecting women.

Demanding justice.





refuse to choose
**Women Deserve Better
than Abortion**
FEMINISTS FOR LIFE.org

P.O. Box 320667
Alexandria, VA 22320

Address Service Requested

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Feminists for Life



Would you say that to my face?

Would you tell me that I never should have been born?

**That is the message sent when people talk about
aborting "gross fetal anomalies."**

People who overcome adversity inspire, challenge and enrich our world.

It's time to question abortion.[®]