

Focus on Life Dinner

April 26, 2018

Guest Speaker:

Clarke Forsythe Senior Counsel,
Americans United for Life



Kalamazoo Right to Life's annual fundraising dinner for the Right to Life of Michigan Education Fund will be held on Thursday, April 26. For the fourth year the dinner will be held at Kalamazoo First Assembly of God's Ministry Center. Doors will open at 5:30 pm and the program will begin at 6:30 pm. In an effort to attract a younger audience, we have lowered the price for students to \$20.

Our guest speaker will be Clark Forsythe. Clarke, who lives in suburban Chicago, is Senior Counsel at Americans United for Life, one of the oldest and most esteemed pro-life groups in the nation. As the legal arm of the pro-life movement, AUL has been at the forefront of drafting pro-life legislation and defending it before state and federal courts. Clarke has appeared before the Supreme Court three times and numerous times before lower courts. He has also testified before Congress and state legislatures. He has authored or co-authored 20 articles on constitutional and bioethical issues. His most recent book, *Abuse of Discretion: The Inside Story of Roe v. Wade (2013)*, has been favorably reviewed in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Chicago Tribune*, *First Things*, *World Magazine*, *National Review*, the *American Spectator*, the *National Catholic Register*, and *Human Life Review*.

Clarke is one of the most prominent pro-life attorneys in the United States. We are highly honored to have him speak to us again.

All proceeds raised at the dinner go toward the RLM Education Fund and are tax deductible. For more information about tickets, contact our office manager, Cyndy Plotz, at 269-372-8123.

**Kalamazoo First Assembly of God
Ministry Center**

5550 Oakland Dr. in Portage

Ticket Prices:

\$40 per person (adult)

\$20 student price (college, high school,
or younger)

Another First for the March for Life

Last year the annual March for Life crowd was treated to live appearances by Vice-president Mike Pence and White House advisor Kellyanne Conway. It marked the first time that such a high-ranking governmental official (Pence) attended the March. Not to be outdone, this year's March featured a live video feed from the Rose Garden at the White House where President Trump spoke to a smaller group about the right to life. Those comments were broadcast live to the March for Life throng. In the past, Presidents Reagan, Bush, and Bush made phone calls to Nellie Gray, the March's founder. But here in 2018 we had the President talk directly to the crowd. Also appearing in person was the Speaker of the House, Paul Ryan of Wisconsin.

20-Week Abortion Ban Fails in Senate

On January 28, the US Senate voted 51 to 46 to break a Democratic-led filibuster that blocked passage of the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act that would ban abortion after the 20th week of pregnancy. The law is based on evidence that the fetus can experience pain at that gestational age. The cloture vote failed because it needed 60 votes. Two GOP senators (Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska) voted against the bill while three Democrats (Joe Donnelly of Indiana, Bob Casey of Pennsylvania, and Joe Machin of West Virginia) voted pro-life. Political pundits have argued that the bill cannot pass in today's political climate and that the three Democrats (in tough red-state reelection races this coming November) voted pro-life to help shore up their conservative base. The House already approved the bill back in October, 237 to 189.

Utah Closer in Banning Down Syndrome Abortion

The Utah House of Representatives approved a bill that would prohibit abortions from being performed on babies solely because they had

been diagnosed with Down Syndrome. The bill has yet to pass the state Senate. Indiana, Ohio, and North Dakota have already passed bills that ban abortion for the specific purpose of eliminating babies with Down Syndrome. A Utah lawmaker said that abortions based on a diagnosis of Down Syndrome are "a eugenic-like eradication" of an entire group of people. Pro-choice activists oppose the bill because they say it infringes on a woman's right to abortion with no restriction.

Good News from Ohio

In mid-February, the Ohio Supreme Court voted 5 to 2 to revoke the license of Toledo's Capital Care Network, northwest Ohio's last abortion clinic. The closest clinic would now be in Ann Arbor. The clinic is appealing for reconsideration. In unrelated but wonderful news, Gov. John Kasich recently signed a bill that would criminalize abortion if the procedure was performed because the fetus had been diagnosed with Down Syndrome. The bill has been challenged in federal court. Said Ohio Right to Life president Mike Gonidakis, "It's a shame that an organization (the ACLU) that claims to...[defend] victims of discrimination completely disregards the most vulnerable members of our society who are being discriminated against."

Goodbye, Sue Baldwin

We say farewell to board member Sue Baldwin, who is moving to New York City where her husband has accepted a new job. Sue has served faithfully for the last eight years, most recently as vice-president. She was the key individual responsible for getting the pro-life billboard along I-94 for several months and for placing the six billboards scattered throughout the Kalamazoo area in the final two months of the 2016 election.

Sue was very involved with our Focus on Life Dinner, and our successes the past several years were due to her leadership. **Thank you, Sue, and we wish you the best in the Big Apple.**

The following is another installment in our series on the 50th anniversary of the pro-life movement.

Judge Halstead Faces Challenge in 1981

In the late summer of 1981 Kalamazoo County became the focus of statewide attention due to the action of one pro-life judge. Donald Halstead was a Kalamazoo County Probate Judge and served in that capacity for 32 years, retiring in 2013. The Judge was a very devout, pro-life Catholic, and a member of KRTL. In September a case came across his desk. An 11-year-old girl had been raped by her mother's 29-year-old boyfriend. Kalamazoo attorney Nelson Pelletier was appointed to represent her and her sister in neglect proceedings against their mother in Juvenile Court. A court-appointed doctor determined that the girl was pregnant and already in her 19th week of pregnancy. Pelletier took the recommendation from social workers that going through with the pregnancy and childbirth would be traumatic for an 11-year-old. But, in a hearing Judge Halstead stated that he did not have the authority to grant an abortion. Pelletier challenged the judge's "indecision." Circuit Court Judge John Fitzgerald then upheld Halstead's order. Pelletier appealed to the US District Court in Grand Rapids.

On October 20 District Court Judge Benjamin Gibson gave Halstead three days to make a decision. Gibson claimed that the Kalamazoo judge had violated the girl's civil rights by refusing to address the issue. Having been compelled to make a final ruling, Halstead issued a controversial decision on October 23. Abortion was not in the girl's best interest. Considering that she was now in her 23rd week, a late-term abortion was dangerous and not "medically indicated." While pro-lifers rallied behind Judge Halstead, and RLM president Barb Listing applauded the decision, a few newspapers were aghast. "The Tragedy in Kalamazoo," shouted a *Detroit News* editorial on November 1, 1981.

"The crime against the girl was monstrous." The column accused Halstead of "waffling"--delaying the decision until it was too late.

The young girl's mother was elated. "We won!" she exclaimed. She planned to raise the baby.

Don Halstead received his share of criticism for not approving an abortion for an 11-year-old minor. While the optics of a pregnant pre-teen was appalling, the judge had to make a decision based on several factors. First, the girl was healthy and could maintain a pregnancy and delivery. The girl's mother indicated that she wanted to raise the baby. The father was considered to be irresponsible. The fact that the girl was 23 weeks into her pregnancy was probably the main reason for declining the abortion. This was just days before the final trimester. Even the Supreme Court ruled in *Roe v. Wade* that states could prohibit abortion in the final trimester. Judge Halstead's wise decision was clearly in the girl's best medical interest.

Judge Halstead became a pro-life hero. He never flinched. He never wavered. He stood up to the pressure and ruled in favor of life.

Postscript: The girl delivered a healthy baby on Feb. 6. However, during the summer the Michigan Department of Social Services intervened. Social workers determined that both mother and grandmother had neglected the baby. Both the newborn and the new mother were placed in separate foster homes. In November the girl permanently lost custody of the baby. The baby's father was convicted of rape and sentenced to seven to fifteen years in prison.

Have You Heard of Project Rosie?

By Emily Fackler, president WMU Students for Life



Students for Life at WMU is blessed to have Students for Life of Michigan supporting us and providing us with different events, apologetics/dialogue trainings, and more throughout the school year. They give us the tools to change hearts and minds on campus.

In November 2017, Students for Life of Michigan launched Project Rosie. Project Rosie is a website, a resource, and a helping hand. Projectrosie.com exists to connect pregnant and parenting students with the resources they need to succeed. How does it work?

With over 20 universities in Michigan involved, pregnant or parenting students can go to the website, choose their campus, and find out about all the different resources available to them in their area. The website provides endless links to organizations and programs that a pregnant or parenting student might need including Peer Support, Pregnancy Options, Housing, Child Care, Post Abortive Care and Support, Finance for Education, Healthcare, Student Rights, Material Assistance, and more.

But how do we get the word out? Through marketing, through social media, through the Students for Life groups on campus, etc. On February 7th, Students for Life at WMU was honored to bring a Project Rosie to WMU. Starting a week before, WMU students began putting up flyers and leaving business cards around campus. Then on the day of the tabling event, each student took a turn handing out business cards to students, professors, and staff in one of the busiest buildings on campus. We reached hundreds of people in just 5 hours. We met parenting and pregnant students and gave them gifts to show our love and support on their journey to motherhood. We were so blessed with the positive and encouraging response we received. Finally, Project Rosie has a digital marketing campaign traveling through WMU's campus in order to ensure everyone on campus has heard of this new, awesome resource.

For more information about this amazing program or to donate, please see www.projectrosie.com



Oratory Contest Winner Announced

On February 24 Kalamazoo Right to Life hosted its 2018 Oratory Contest. Five students spoke on the topics of abortion, euthanasia, human cloning, and infanticide at Kalamazoo Christian High School.

The judges this year were: State Senator Margaret O'Brien, Tim Brown, and Preston Talanda-Fisher.



KRTL President Rob Karrer, Preston Talanda-Fisher, Tim Brown, Senator Margaret O'Brien, Levi Pierpont, Kayla Bellwere, Teresa Skrobola, Rosa Skrobola, and Mary Ankenbauer

Taking first place this year was **Kayla Bellwere**, an 11th grade homeschooler who spoke on the topic of human cloning.



KRTL President Rob Karrer congratulates the first place winner, Kayla Bellwere.

The second place winner was **Teresa Skrobola**, a 10th grade homeschool student.

Students tied for third place: **Rosa Skrobola**, a homeschooled 9th grader, and **Mary Ankenbauer**, a senior at Hackett Catholic Prep.



From left to right: Teresa Skrobola, Mary Ankenbauer, Levi Pierpont, Rosa Skrobola and Kayla Bellwere

Once again, all those who attended were amazed at the presentations. They were well-written, thoughtful, and persuasive. Kayla will have the opportunity of giving her speech at the Focus on Life Dinner on April 26. She will also compete in the Right to Life of Michigan state High School Oratory Contest on May 5 in Holt, Michigan.

Former Board Member Betty McGraw Dies

On December 30, 2017, long-time board member Betty McGraw passed away at the age of 89. She and her husband Jack were very early members of KRTL and served on the board during the 1970s and 1980s. Their pro-life activism was a true partnership, both playing vital roles for almost twenty years. Betty and Jack were married for 64 years until Jack's passing a few years ago. Thank you, Betty, for a life well lived.

Rest in Peace.

President's Corner

by Rob Karrer

Now that the holidays are over it's time to turn our attention to politics. What? Aren't we being bombarded by politics right now...round the clock...24/7? Are Democrats and Republicans at each other's throats? Yes, that is all very true and very sad. America has become a polarized nation, more than at any time in my lifetime. But, with the mid-term elections fast approaching, pro-life Michiganders have to put aside what we don't like about politics and focus on the three very important tasks ahead: elect a pro-life governor, elect a pro-life senator to replace Debbie Stabenow, send back to Lansing pro-life majorities in the state House and Senate.

Governor Snyder is finishing his second term and cannot run again. I think we can all agree that while he has been supportive of some of our pro-life legislation, he has been very weak on the life issues. Several pro-life Republicans have entered the race to replace him. The Michigan Primary this summer will determine who will represent our interests in November.

Senator Stabenow has been a thorn in the pro-life side since 1979 when she was first elected to the Michigan House. She went on to the Michigan Senate before defeating Senator Spencer Abraham in 2000. While in Washington she has proudly maintained a 100 percent pro-abortion voting record. We need a strong pro-life challenger to unseat a formidable incumbent in Senator Stabenow.

Let 2018 be the year we elect pro-life lawmakers to Lansing and Washington!

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