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A Woman's Vision Becomes Reality in Naples Farmhouse

By Teresa A. Parsons

Sylvia McGill's commitment began with a vision of a beautiful, serene, and caring environment for pregnant young women — Faith Haven. In her dream, young women were supported in giving life to healthy children. But beyond that, the women themselves continued to learn and grow and seek direction for their lives.

McGill gained awareness of the need for concrete alternatives to abortion through work for the City of Rochester School District and her experience as a foster parent. As a researcher of students' or parents' grievances in the city schools, she saw teenagers who were pregnant and through foster care, brought several into her home.

"When you hear stories about gals who've had abortions, you want to go out like a tigress with your claws exposed and tear it all

down," she said of the popular belief that abortion ends the problem of pregnancy.

"But if you walk up to a pregnant girl or a woman and start telling her abortion is a bad thing, she's going to say 'OK, what do I do? Where do I go?'" McGill observed.

"The need is really slammed home when you're living with it," she observed of her last two foster children, both pregnant and both "very young." "You get a close-up view of their needs and what to do about them," she added. "So I had ideas to do this, and ideas to do that." But the power behind her commitment came from her vision.

Faith Haven will accommodate five women for up to three months and five more for as much as nine months. Quartered in a huge farmhouse now being renovated, it sits amid hundreds of acres of land in Ontario

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Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal
Sylvia McGill pauses a moment in front of her home for unwed mothers in Geneva. It has taken McGill about a year to renovate the home, which is scheduled to open this fall.

Rochester Native Seeks Homes for Unwed Mothers

By Teresa A. Parsons

Kathy DiFiore's is an extraordinary commitment founded in loneliness and fueled by the belief that she is saving lives.

In the past five years, DiFiore has housed 30 pregnant women and girls in her Ramsey, N.J., home, some for more than a year. She has successfully challenged New Jersey state legislation after discovering that it prohibited her activity. Last week, she came home to Rochester to promote her organization's toll-free hotline that will connect pregnant teens and young women who need help with a network of volunteers willing to provide homes from Vermont to Virginia. Along the way, she has been fired from her job, her house has been searched, and she has been fined \$10,000.

And she has been present at eight deliveries to watch and hold the miracle of life in her hands. "Those were babies I know God helped me save," she said.

A former Rochester resident, DiFiore graduated from East High School and the University of Rochester. Recalling her

former lifestyle, she said "I had been blessed by the Lord with many things — a beautiful home, good secure job, magnificent salary — but I was very lonely. I felt very empty."

Divorced and without children of her own, she began to ask God if there was something she could do for Him that might help her with her problem.

"I really didn't care what it was," she recalled. "I'd be a candystriper in a hospital ... volunteer some time in a senior citizen home ... I didn't know what it was going to be, but I figured I could pray and He would show me."

An advertisement for Birthright hit that special note. Six months later, DiFiore welcomed the first pregnant woman into her home. Over the years, they have included women aged 16 to their mid-20's, most from broken homes or foster care. About one-third have had previous abortions — one of DiFiore's recent guests has had eight.

Ideologically, she wasn't even particularly pro-life when she began. "I was one of those closet people who doesn't want to say what

they really think or feel about the issue," she said. "For me, the caring started small and gradually moved to a very large sacrifice. I think that's the way the Lord works."

Although the Birthright concept was a starting point, she quickly recognized needs the program didn't meet — among them, a place for mothers to stay for a period of time after their babies were born, and respect and support for their choices in regard to their babies. In response, she founded her own organization, called Several Sources Foundation, headquartered in her home. Several Sources now boasts a network of 10 homes and about 40 volunteers.

"We encourage life, physical and spiritual," DiFiore said of her approach.

"What I have found in our area is that if a young woman can't keep her baby, very often she'll choose alternatives like abortion. They see it (adoption) as very difficult, something they'll have to relate to for the rest of their lives."

But, she pointed out, abortion is equally as

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Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal
Kathy DiFiore

Administration Asks Court To Overturn Abortion Ruling

By Liz S. Armstrong

Washington (NC) — The Reagan administration, prompted by abortion law cases from Pennsylvania and Illinois, asked the U.S. Supreme Court July 15 to overturn its landmark 1973 decision legalizing abortion.

The administration, in a Justice Department friend-of-the-court brief, argued that the Constitution itself contains no language guaranteeing abortion rights and that the court's 1973 Roe vs. Wade abortion ruling was flawed.

A "compelling ground for our urging reconsideration of Roe vs. Wade is our belief that the textual, historical and doctrinal basis of that decision is so far flawed that this court should overrule it and return the law to the condition in which it was before that case was decided," the brief declared. "There is no explicit, textual warrant in the Constitution for a right to an abortion."

Prior to the high court's 1973 ruling, various states forbade abortion while others did not.

The Justice Department also stated that the 1973 ruling "is a source of such instability in the law that this court should reconsider that decision and on reconsideration should abandon it."

In its brief, the Justice Department also argued that the federal appeals courts rulings in the Pennsylvania and Illinois cases should be overturned because the rulings in those cases, too, were "multiply flawed."

By urging the court to overturn its 1973 decision, the Justice Department apparently sought an overruling for the first time since 1954, when the department suc-

cessfully asked the court in Brown vs. Board of Education to throw out the 1896 ruling permitting racially "separate but equal" schools.

The Supreme Court had agreed in April and May to hear the Pennsylvania and Illinois disputes.

The Pennsylvania case involves the state Abortion Control Act, passed in 1982 but largely gutted by the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia.

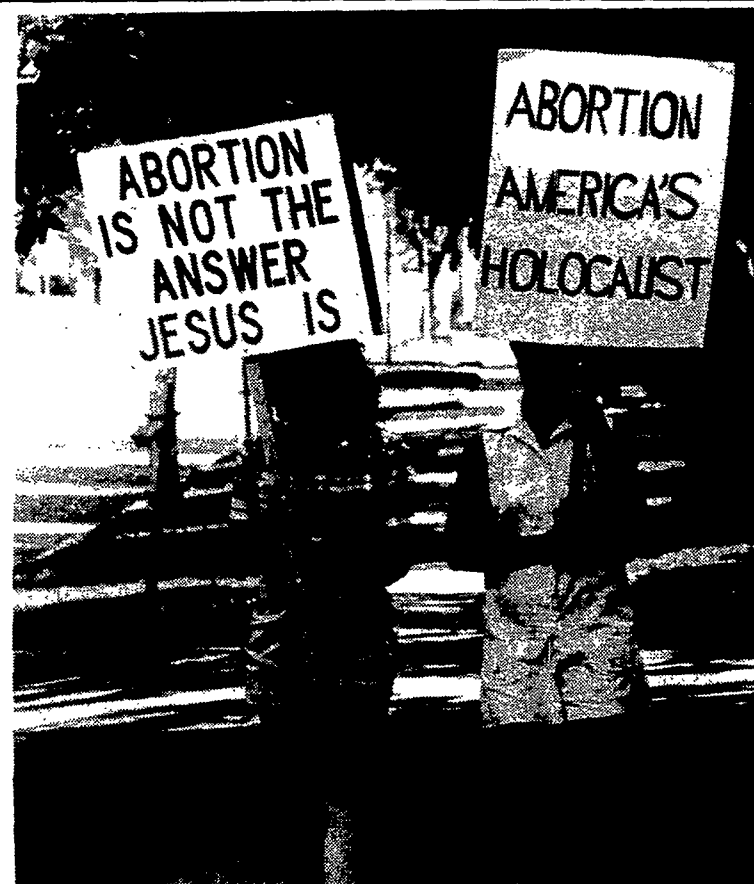
Provisions of the law struck down by the appeals court demanded that a woman seeking an abortion be told of the adverse psychological and physical effects and be advised of potential pre-natal and childbirth assistance; that a second physician be available to save a viable fetus aborted; that the physician use an abortion method most likely to save the unborn baby as long as the woman was not threatened; and that the physician file various reports with the state.

The Illinois law, also invalidated in large part, demanded that doctors use abortion methods most likely to preserve the child and that doctors tell women that certain tools or forms of pregnancy prevention — such as the intrauterine device — are abortifacients.

The Illinois law was struck down by the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, based in Chicago.

In their rulings, according to the Justice Department, the appeals courts "betrayed unabashed hostility to state regulation of abortion and ill-disguised suspicion of state legislators' motives."

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Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal
Lorie Daucev and Kathy Pabis of the Cornerstone Christian Fellowship display their point of view at the entrance to The Genesee Hospital Saturday, May 13.

Inside this Week's Edition

Peace Weekend

Local and national events are planned to mark the 40th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki — Page 4.

Homecoming Mass

Parishioners at St. Vincent DePaul Church celebrated the 100th birthday of their place of worship with a joyful outdoor Mass — Page 5.

What's Ahead?

Father Kevin McKenna previews the upcoming Extraordinary Synod, plus national and international news — Page 8.

Balancing Act

Sister Ann Patrice Carrigan shares the ups and downs of her job as literary director for the GeVa Theatre — Page 10.