

# Victims remembered during abortion rally

By Mark Pattison  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Dawn Ravenell was not one of the 500,000 marchers for abortion rights in Washington April 5.

Nor was she one of the few hundred counterprotesters at a small rally that day or a pro-life vigil April 4.

Dawn Ravenell is dead, the victim of a legal abortion. She would have been 20 this year had she not died as a result of her abortion in 1985 at age 13.

She was one of 106 women identified by the Washington chapter of Feminists for Life as having died as the result of a legal abortion. They were somberly memorialized at the vigil, their names printed on mock tombstones — which also included their age, race, date and location of death — and the doctor who performed the abortion.

Beth Luteran, Feminists for Life chapter president, said at the vigil that the abortion-rights rally sponsored by the National Organization for Women and the National Abortion Rights Action League was a "death march."

Police estimated the crowd at 500,000 for the rally on a chilly, windy day that was more reminiscent of the annual Jan. 22 March for Life rallies in Washington.

"The death solution is no approach to the problem," Luteran said. She, as did other women in the vigil crowd of about 150, wore white armbands to signify that they had had an abortion.

Frederica Mathewes-Green, national spokeswoman for Feminists for Life, said the women with armbands were "wounded veterans" of the abortion war.

It is a war many a woman still fights within herself, she said, adding that "as long as she's in denial, she's not going to come to grips with who she's lost" through abortion.

Depicting the situation many women feel once they learn they are pregnant, Mathewes-Green said, "A woman wants an abortion like an animal with its leg caught in a trap wants to gnaw its leg off in order to get freed."

At the April 5 counterprotest on the West Lawn of the Capitol, where a manmade pond separated the counterprotesters from the abortion-rights rally stage, about 300 people engaged in more than two hours of nonstop slogan chanting, with cheers and roars from the half-million on the Mall lending occasional punctuation to the scene.

Typical chants included, "Pro-life, pro-woman," "Not now, not ever," "Real feminists don't kill babies," and "Life, yes, abortion, no," with its Spanish counterpart, "Vida, si, aborto, no."

Signs abounded at the counterprotest as well, including, "Susan B. Anthony Called Abortion 'Child Murder,'" "Exploit Women! Support Abortion!," "Abortion: A Neat, Quick and Easy Way Out — For Men," and "If the Issue Were Slavery, Would There Be Such a Thing as 'Pro-Choice?'"

Most of the counterprotesters came from the Washington area. Dan Walsh, 26, of Washington, said he came "just to make the pro-life presence felt."

"This is the other side's day," he said, looking at the abortion-rights rally, "but not to let it go unanswered."

Feminists for Life member Amy Crossed said she got more involved in the abortion issue while a student at



Philip Archer  
**SIDES STANDOFF** — A pro-life activist (right) argues with a pro-choice demonstrator during an abortion-rights march April 5 in Washington, D.C. An estimated 500,000 pro-choice advocates jammed the streets of the nation's capital in an attempt to persuade the Supreme Court to keep abortion legal.

the Catholic University of America, Washington, which in recent years has been the focus of an ongoing debate about whether the school should permit an abortion-rights student group on campus.

The issue grew even more personal for Crossed last year, when she learned she was pregnant. It was the same situation she had theorized about for years — single, pregnant, with parents who "took it hard."

"It never crossed my mind that abortion would be an option," Crossed said. "I considered adoption, because I

knew there would be a lot of people who would want this baby."

Her parents are "very traditional," she added, but "after the initial shock, they were very supporting and very affirmative." Others offered prenatal and postnatal care for her and her child.

She kept the baby, Charlie, born in mid-March. The baby's father carried the child in a front pouch throughout the counterprotest. And Crossed said she and the boy's father are planning to marry in May.



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