

Nominee for surgeon general draws early fire

By Nancy Frazier O'Brien
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Some groups that had opposed former Surgeon General Dr. Joycelyn Elders took an immediate stand against her proposed successor, a Tennessee doctor who supports legal abortion and distribution of condoms to young people.

President Clinton Feb. 2 announced his nomination of Dr. Henry W. Foster Jr., 61, as surgeon general.

Gary Bauer, president of the Family Research Council, called the Nashville obstetrician and gynecologist "Elders Lite" and said he hoped the nominee would not be confirmed by the Senate.

But the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, which had strongly opposed Elders throughout her brief tenure as surgeon general, took a wait-and-see attitude. "We have no opinion yet," said a spokeswoman in the league's New York office Feb. 3. "We are waiting to get more information."

Russell Shaw, spokesman for the Knights of Columbus, said his organization also had not yet taken a formal position on the nomination. "But I can say that the positions Dr. Foster holds on contraception for teenagers and abortion and his support for Planned Parenthood are totally unacceptable from the point of view of the Knights of Columbus," he said.

Shaw also said it was "dismaying" that after the outcry against Elders, Clinton would "come up with a new nominee whose views are so much like hers."

A statement issued Feb. 3 in Foster's name by the Department of Health and

Human Services said the nominee had performed fewer than a dozen abortions and delivered more than 10,000 babies during his medical career. Most of the abortions were done to "save the lives of the women or because the women had been the victims of rape or incest," the statement said.

"If abortion is provided, my wish is that it be safe, legal and rare," Foster said.

Currently on the board of directors

of Tennessee Planned Parenthood, Foster was a member of Planned Parenthood's national board in 1978-81 and its national advisory council in 1981-85.

Since 1989, he has served on the National Leadership Committee to Keep Abortion Safe and Legal, a Planned Parenthood affiliate organization.

A native of Arkansas, Foster attended medical school with Elders at the University of Arkansas. After a stint as medical officer with the U.S. Air Force, he

became chief of obstetrics and gynecology at John A. Andrew Memorial Hospital at Tuskegee University in 1965, a post he still holds.

He also has been professor and chairman of the department of obstetrics and gynecology at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, 1973-90; dean of the School of Medicine and vice president for health services at Meharry, 1990-93; and acting president of the college, 1993-94. He has been a health policy fellow at the Association of Academic Health Centers in Washington since July.

Foster founded Meharry's "I Have a Future" program seven years ago to help teenagers in Nashville housing projects avoid pregnancy, stay in school and learn job skills and self-responsibility.

The medical part of the program provides physical exams, screening for sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy tests and contraceptives. Abortion counseling is not offered, and pregnant teenagers are referred to other programs.

Group targets ABC and HBO

NEW YORK (CNS) — Morality in Media is focusing on ABC's "NYPD Blue" and the HBO cable channel's "Real Sex" anthology for its fourth annual "Turn Off TV Day," slated for Feb. 10.

The anti-pornography organization said in a statement the two shows are "trend setters ... and in both cases the trend is toward more and more four-letter words, nudity and pornography" on TV.

Morality in Media listed a series of proposals for Congress to address.

Among them are expanding the number of obscenity crimes covered by the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, telling the Federal Communications Commission to enforce regulations intended to restrict youth access to dial-a-porn services, and expanding to 24 hours a day the time when indecent material may not be broadcast.

Other proposals include:
• Addressing the growing problem of hard-core pornography found on computer bulletin boards.

• Screening prospective federal judges on their position on obscenity law enforcement.



AP/Wide World Photos

Evacuating wounded

U.N. Norwegian medical personnel Feb. 1 assist a one-legged man from a vehicle outside the Koseva Hospital in Sarajevo. In the biggest evacuation convoy since the beginning of the war in Bosnia, the U.N. transported 116 sick and wounded Muslims from the besieged enclave of Gorazade.

Elmira astronaut's destiny is rooted in 'Star Trek'

By Matthew R. Gomez
Catholic News Service

ORLANDO, Fla. — The path that led Air Force Lt. Col. Eileen Marie Collins into space might have started in front of a TV set in a Catholic household in Elmira, according to her sister.

Margy Conklin, a member of St. Charles Parish in Orlando, recalls watching the 1960s sci-fi series "Star Trek" with her sister, who became the first female to pilot a space shuttle aircraft when Discovery took off from Kennedy Space Center Feb. 3.

"I hated that show," she said. "My sister loved it. Who would have thought that years later she would be the one traveling in outer space?"

Conklin and her family watched the launch from a special family viewing area at Kennedy Space Center. They invited Father Bill Zamborsky, pastor at Holy Spirit Church in Mims and a long-time family friend, to bless the flight in view of the launch.

"Once the rockets fire up and the mission is under way all we have to do is

pray for her safety," she said in a Jan. 31 interview with *The Florida Catholic* newspaper. "She'll be just a touch closer to heaven."

Conklin said Father Zamborsky "has his entire church community praying for Eileen and the other astronauts. Many of his parishioners work at (the space center), so they know what this is all about."

Her parents, James and Rose Marie Collins, and their children are former members of St. Patrick's Church in Elmira. All four Collins children attended Catholic school.

"My parents wanted us to have exposure to the word of God not only at

home and at Sunday Mass, but at school as well," Collins said in an April 1994 interview with *St. Anthony Messenger*. "My father insisted, 'You will go to a Catholic school. I don't care what it costs.'"

Collins, 38, now belongs to St. Bernadette Parish in Houston. She and her husband, Pat Youngs, a Delta Airlines pilot whom she married in 1987, have been counselors for engaged couples and participated in a Marriage Encounter weekend.

The eight-day Discovery mission piloted by Collins included a historic rendezvous with Russia's Mir space station earlier this week.

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