

Remembering 'Roe'

Paul Tuns (THE INTERIM, March 2017)

When Norman McCorvey – the “Roe” of the eponymous Supreme Court decision – died last month, many obituaries portrayed her as a passive pawn. Focusing on the difference between the mythic Roe and real-life McCorvey, remembrances like the one in the *New York Times* found occasion to wax philosophical about the distance between one person’s life and the forces of history. Such eulogies, however, should have looked harder at McCorvey, for her journey from abortion proponent to pro-life activist teaches a very different lesson. Indeed, McCorvey’s life was not an imperfect parable about larger ideological conflicts; hers, instead, was a perfect story of sin and redemption, of error and salvation, of evil and good that encapsulates the ultimate trajectory of the same sad chapter of history to which she lent an anonymous name. Her own conversation anticipates the one to which our culture must inevitably submit, and her courageous and prophetic example is one which will edify pro-life generations yet to be born.

'Jane Roe' Norma McCorvey, RIP

On Feb. 18, Norma McCorvey, whose abortion case made it to Supreme Court of the United States, passed away at the age of 69.

McCorvey was the “Jane Roe” in *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark Supreme Court ruling that legalized abortion. When McCorvey became pregnant in 1969 at the age of 21, her friends advised she falsely claim she was raped to obtain a legal abortion under the restrictive Texas law of the day. After attempting to procure an illegal abortion, lawyers Linda Coffee and Sarah Weddington, who were seeking abortion-minded women to test the constitutionality of abortion laws, took her case. They claimed she was unemployable and depressed and therefore needed to have access to abortion. They sued Dallas County district attorney Henry Wade so he would not enforce the Texas law the only permitted abortion in cases to save the mother’s life.

By the time the case began, McCorvey had delivered her child and put her up for adoption. McCorvey never attended trial and said she never read Coffee and Weddington’s affidavit. The case wound up before the Supreme Court of the United States within two years.

On Jan. 22, 1973, in a 7-2 decision, the Court threw out state and federal restrictions on abortion, and nearly 60 million preborn babies have been victims of the procedure since.

McCorvey went on to take a lesbian lover and work in abortion facilities until her conversion to Christianity in 1995. She called her role in legalizing abortion “the biggest mistake of my life.” She also said, “I long for the day that justice will be done and the burden from all of these deaths will be removed from my shoulders.” In her second autobiography, *Won by Love*, McCorvey described her pro-life conversion while sitting in an Operation Rescue office: “I noticed a fetal development poster. The progression was so obvious, the eyes were so sweet. It hurt my heart, just looking at them. I ran outside and finally, it dawned on me. ‘Norma’, I said to myself, ‘They’re right’ ... I should have known. Yet something in that poster made me lose my breath.” She wrote, “I felt crushed under the truth of this realization ... Abortion – at any point – was wrong. It was so clear. Painfully clear.”

In 1998, she told a Senate subcommittee, “I am dedicated to spending the rest of my life undoing the law that bears my name.” In 2005, McCorvey petitioned the Supreme Court to overturn *Roe*, arguing that she had standing to do so as one of the original litigants; her lawyer argued the case should be reheard as there was new evidence that abortion harms women, but the Court denied her petition.

McCorvey became a pro-life activist, speaking to pro-life rallies, including the Washington March for Life, and began picketing prominent abortion supporters, including President Barack Obama when he spoke at Notre Dame.

In 1998 she was received into the Catholic Church by Fr. Frank Pavone, director of Priests for Life. He said in a statement following her passing, “she was victimized and exploited by abortion ideologues when she was a young woman but she came to be genuinely sorry that a decision named for her has led to the deaths of more than 58 million children.”

Jim Hughes, national president of Campaign Life Coalition, told *The Interim*, he met McCorvey on several occasions. He recalled the first time, “was in a small room with about 40 life and family leaders and she broke down while talking, and I went up and put my arm around her, and I called on Rev. Johnny Hunter, a black pastor, to lead us in a prayer for Norma and everyone got up and hugged her.”

Hughes said that McCorvey was “used by the abortion industry, she didn’t know about abortion and she was manipulated.”

維護生命的鬥士－羅蔓麥葛菲 (Norma McCorvey) 的故事

翻譯及撮要: Paul Lee

羅蔓麥葛菲在 2017 年 2 月 18 日離世，享年 69 歲。

在她的生命旅程中，由一位墮胎的倡導者，轉變成一位維護生命的活躍分子，當中給了我們不同的啟示。她的人生展現了一個從犯罪到認罪、從錯誤到救贖、從罪性到善性的圓滿故事。

1969 年，羅蔓在她 21 歲時懷了身孕。她的朋友教唆她說假話，宣稱自己被強姦而懷孕。她要求美國德州法院批准她進行合法的墮胎。兩位律師- 蓮達(Linda Coffee)及沙拉(Sarah Weddington)被聘請為羅蔓提出合法墮胎的訴求，原因是羅蔓沒有職業及受抑鬱所困擾。她們控告達拉斯郡地區的律政專員亨利懷特 (Henry Wade)，為的是要他沒法在羅蔓的個案中施行德州的法律(德州只准許因母親懷孕而危及生命的情況纔可進行墮胎)。在聆訊正式開始時，羅蔓將嬰孩誕下，並讓別人收養。這訴訟歷時兩年，最後在 1973 年 1 月 22 日，陪審團以 7 比 2 的比數裁定聯邦的墮胎禁制失效，因而引致日後美國約 6 千萬的未生胎兒成為受害者。

羅蔓在墮胎的設施裏服務，直至她在 1995 年皈依成為基督徒。她稱自己在墮胎合法化的角色上犯了「生命中最大的錯誤」。她說：「我盼望有一天公義再被伸張，我肩膀所負「胎兒死亡」的重擔也被擱去。」

羅蔓維護生命的歷程源於一張掛在拯救行動中心牆上的海報，它展示了一個在母親腹中帶着微笑的胎兒，眼神流露着一份甜蜜。當羅蔓看了那胎兒一眼，她心中感到刺痛，並立時跑出門外。

1998 年，羅蔓決志將餘生放在推翻以她命名的墮胎法案的行動上。2005 年，羅蔓向高等法院提出申訴，要求重新檢視墮胎法案，並提出新的証據，證明墮胎對婦女構成傷害，可惜法院否決了她的申請。同年，她被接納加入天主教會，並成為維護生命的鬥士，在不同的團體中努力推行「反墮胎」運動。

