

Cathedral Cemetery Memorial a Moving Tribute to Dee Becker

Approximately 50 people showed up for the first Memorial Tribute to DRTL founder, Dolores (Dee) Becker at Cathedral Cemetery. Under sunny warm skies, Delawareans listened to three speakers recount the story of how 63 aborted babies came to be buried there at Cathedral Cemetery 35 years ago. The speakers were followed by a stirring reflection by Deacon Anthony Gallo on the value and purpose of each human life. Afterwards, participants laid roses at the gravesite and a reception followed.

Felix Spitelle, representing the Knights of Columbus, read verbatim an article from *The Dialog*, the diocesan newspaper that covered the event in 1990, explaining the history of the memorial service. Bodies of aborted babies had been found in cardboard boxes on a loading dock in the Chicago area by pro-lifers, who had been tipped off by pathology lab staff,

who were tasked with disposing of the bodies. While there were thousands of bodies destroyed by abortion, each was labeled by the mother's name and state and that is how Dee Becker became aware of the 63 babies from Delaware. By chance, one of the participants in the process from that time, Walter Gies, was present at the tribute and spoke briefly about his involvement in bringing the bodies of the aborted babies from Chester, Pennsylvania, to Wilmington. "They were packed in plastic bags and WhirlPak containers but you could see they were babies; little arms and feet and genitalia were visible. We (Dee Becker and I) cried and cried," he remembers.

Determined to bury the babies with dignity in their home state, Becker arranged a Mass and funeral service. The funeral cortege was given a police escort and Dougherty Funeral Homes donated the tiny casket and burial costs. Later, the Knights of Columbus paid to have a beautiful headstone placed as a memorial. Hundreds attended, including a few pro-abortion Delawareans, who conceded that the gesture to bury the babies was laudable, calling Becker "a wise and wonderful woman," according to a *News Journal Cont. on p. 2*



Martie Sturtevant, Becker's granddaughter, gave an insightful portrait of Dee to attendees.



Members of the Becker family, Knights of Columbus, and longtime pro-lifers attended the tribute at Cathedral Cemetery on October 18.

**THIS ISSUE IS DECIDATED
TO OUR FOUNDER,
DEE BECKER**

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Dee Becker: A Delaware Pro-Life Legend

By Grace LoPorto

Dolores “Dee” Rheinwalt was born in 1926, in Reading, PA. She attended Catholic high school, then business school, and worked in radio until her marriage to Richard Becker, a WWII veteran, in 1948. They moved a number of times before settling in Wilmington, DE, where they had seven children.

It was 1969. Dee attended a session of the Delaware General Assembly in Dover, and saw the repeal of the Delaware laws prohibiting abortion. She told the local Catholic newspaper, *The Dialog*, that, at that moment, she vowed to God that she would not give up her fight for life.

Distraught, Dee called her priest, Fr. William Jennings, after the passing of the legislation. At his 100th birthday party, Jennings said that that conversation helped inspire him and the bishop to give the Church of the Holy



Dolores Becker, with dear friend and colleague, Jack Ames of Maryland in 2015.

Child its name; Jennings had originally wanted to name the parish after Mary.

In 1973, Dee went with Jean Piziak to attend a presentation on abortion at St. Hedwig's, in Chester, PA. The conversations started by that presentation, and the passing of Roe V. Wade, spurred Dee to start Delaware Right to Life. Jean Piziak was the secretary, and Dee Becker was the president, of that early DRTL.

Dee went on to help found the Delaware Pro-Life Coalition and the Delaware chapter of Birthright. Fran Urick, of Dover, recalls how the early Coalition meetings were held at Dee's house; Urick would attend them with his wife.

Dee wasn't just a local figure; she worked on the national March For Life in Washington, DC, with Nellie Gray, who founded the March. Dee was the Vice President of the March For Life, and spoke at many of the Marches. She met with Presidents Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush. She attended the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, Egypt, as a delegate. And throughout all of this, Dee continued her local work of advocacy, spreading knowledge, and helping the unborn. She was knighted by Pope John Paul II into the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, for her religious and pro-life work.

Dee died at age 93 in 2020, at her granddaughter's house in Wilmington, after a lifetime of service.

Becker Memorial at Cathedral Cemetery

Cont. from p. 1 opinion piece that ran at the time.

A lively recollection of Becker's involvement in the pro-life movement was relayed by her granddaughter, Martie Sturtevant, who claims her grandmother “was always on the phone” and in one month in 1976, racked up a \$1,200 phone bill. She attested to her grandmother's strong spirit and leadership, citing more than one run-in with politicians, clergy, and fellow pro-lifers. In all, however, she left a legacy of respect and admiration.

Deacon Gallo's reflection on the value of human life complemented the many stories about Becker and her lifelong dedication to the unborn. She sacrificed and prayed, worked and did not count the cost, setting an example for the future of the pro-life movement and those involved in it. At the reception afterwards, it was surmised how many babies' lives were saved because of one valiant woman.

In Memoriam

To those stalwart
pro-lifers we lost
recently. May their
souls rest in peace.

Kenneth Weinig



Flowers laid at the memorial stone in Cathedral Cemetery for Victims of Abortion



Walter Gies and Betty O'Malley, who attended the original ceremony in 1990



Deacon Gallo gives a stirring reflection.



Children of Dee and Dick Becker at memorial tribute.



Representing the Knights of Columbus, Felix Spitelle tells the story of the babies' burial in 1990.



Knights of Columbus members stand guard during the ceremony



Delaware Right to Life to Hold Open House Dec. 7

Please mark your calendars for a special Open House at our new office in Newark on Saturday, December 7, from 1—3 p.m. Refreshments will be served and you can check out our new digs at 226 W. Park Place with a Christmas theme! We will shamelessly be soliciting donations at the event, as well as giving away some door prizes. www.dertighttolife.org/calendar for details!



Save the Date!
Open House
Dec. 7, 1-3



*We greatly appreciate your continued prayers and financial support. If you'd like to donate **today**, you can go directly to our website using the QR code below.*



Delaware Loses Stalwart Pro-Life Supporter

Good friend to Delaware Right to Life and staunch defender of the truth, Kenneth Weinig, passed away on September 24 in his home in New Hampshire at age 82. Ken's wife, Kathy, served for years on the board of DRTL and both were devoted to the pro-life cause.

Founder of The Independence School in Newark, Delaware, Ken taught his students logic, reason, and the pursuit of virtue, timeless values with which to face the world. He lived and raised his family by those same values.

His razor wit and intellect were tempered by a terrific sense of humor, love of practical jokes, and addiction to candy. Among his many interests was a collection of antique toys that he turned into a museum in his NH basement.

After years as an educator, Ken prized his rustic life in New Hampshire with his wife, family, and dogs. May his soul rest in peace.