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## In Memoriam: Bart T. Heffernan, M.D., 2/15/ 25-6/26/90

Joseph R. Stanton

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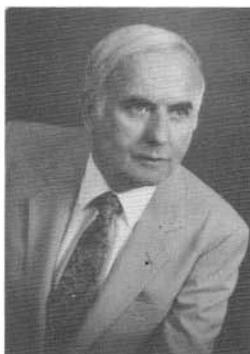
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**IN MEMORIAM**  
**BART T. HEFFERNAN, M.D.**

**2/15/25 - 6/26/90**



Euripedes in *Temeridae* wrote, "When good men die their goodness does not perish, but lives on though they are gone." And Robert Louis Stevenson wrote of the physician's kindness and skill:

"There are men and classes of men that stand above the common herd; the soldier, the sailor, and the shepherd not infrequently; the artist rarely; rarer still the clergyman; the physician almost as a rule. He is the flower (such as it is) of our civilization . . . Generosity he has such as is possible to those who practice an art, never to those who drive a trade; discretion, tested by a hundred secrets; tact, tried by a hundred embarrassments; and what are more important, Heracleian cheerfulness and courage."

I rise to pay tribute today to one who across the past twenty years I was privileged to call "friend". He exhibited gentleness, generosity of spirit and goodness, dedication, discretion and devotion, tact, cheerfulness and courage of the highest degree.

Born in Chicago, Bart attended Loyola grammar and High School.

As he finished high school, Pearl Harbor and World War II were extinguishing the light of freedom all over the world — 18 year old Bart enlisted as a soldier in the U.S. Army. He suffered the rigors of that awful winter in the Battle of the Bulge. Wounded at Bastogne, the Purple Heart, a Silver Star and the Bronze Medal bear witness to the patriotism and courage that distinguished his lifetime.

Returning to civilian life, he completed college at Loyola University. Choosing the profession of medicine, he entered Stritch School of Medicine, graduating as president of his class. Trained in medicine and cardiology in Milwaukee, he returned there. He served on the staff of St. Francis Hospital in Evanston from 1956-1974. He rose to the position of Director of the Galvin Heart Center and Chief of the Department of Medicine.

Recognized as a good physician by his peers, he earned fellowship in the American College of Cardiology, the American Society of Internal Medicine, and a host of other professional affiliations. He was a long time assistant professor on the faculty of medicine at Stritch.

In 1974, the rigors of winter's wind off the lake forced a now frailer Bart to move with Gloria to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where he practiced internal medicine and cardiology on the staff of Holy Cross Hospital.

Yet it was not our common discipleship in medicine that drew Bart and me together, it was his uncommon, yea, heroic dedication to the protection of all human life from conception to natural death. Long before others recognized the approaching juggernaut of abortion on demand, Bart was at Barat College, one of 9 or 10 visionaries joined in the first meeting of what was to become the National Right to Life Committee. A founding member of Illinois Right to Life, he also gave generously of time and talent to the Catholic Physicians' Guild.

In this city, Bart's brother-in-law, that legal genius the late and so great Dennis Horan, intervened legally in 1969 to defend the increasingly defenseless unborn children. Bart Heffernan, M.D. became then officially the guardian ad litem for the class of unborn children in this great state.

The U.S. Supreme Court case, Heffernan vs. Doe, No. 70-106, October '71 term, unites Dennis and Bart in defense of the unborn for the historic record of this nation.

So too, does their so brilliant brief filed in *Roe v. Wade*, in which I and 242 physicians from medical schools and hospitals across America joined Bart Heffernan, M.D. as amici curiae. That was the amicus brief in *Roe v. Wade* that Mr. Justice Blackmun ignored in unleashing abortion on demand across America. And it is the unchanging facts in that brief that will one day, please God, doom *Roe* and *Doe* and their Herodian slaughter of the unborn to the dust bins of history. Looking back on the historic record when all too few noticed or cared, a busy doctor and a busy lawyer were selflessly spending endless hours, dedicating incredible amounts of time and effort, utilizing their combined immense intellectual talents and energies to defend the unborn.

Bart was married to Gloria Volini and Dennis to her sister, Dolores Volini. The two sisters, daughters of a physician, one a physician, the other a lawyer, were Bart and Dennis's soulmates and unflinching supporters in what was a labor of love.

Reflect on what the pro-life movement owes to Bart and to Dennis. Think of their earliest combined efforts in Supreme Court amicus brief in *Roe v. Wade* and the 1970 publication of "Abortion and Social Justice". Those events were historic, epochal. They galvanized the pro-life movement and brought coherence and intellectual and legal credibility to the defense of the unborn in a way that did not exist before the public domain.

In September, 1973, Bart underwent surgery on an aneurysm of the heart. Emerging from that surgery, a once vigorous Bart tasted the bitter cup as expressed in "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." Markedly

restricted by a decreased cardiac output, ever threatened by arrhythmia and congestive failure, Bart kept up the good fight. From his pen flowed perceptive analyses and ideas for strategy to defend the unborn. Despite the ever present burden of physical weariness in late years, when questioned, Bart always responded, "I'm pretty good", and then we would move on.

Only recently I learned of Bart's inventive genius with six registered patents dealing with blood collection devices to his name and of the reflective Bart, the sculptor.

Yet, I will always think of Bart in terms of the Beatitudes, his pureness of heart, his hunger and thirst for justice for the most fragile, most vulnerable of all God's magnificent creation. The pure of heart shall, we are promised, see God, and the hungerers and thirsters for justice shall be filled, so scripture promises. Like St. Paul, Bart has finished the race and run it with exemplary tenacity and purpose. We were all enriched by his presence and friendship as we are bereft in his passing.

Surely I speak for all of us present as we reach out this day in love, support and sympathy to Bart's wife, Gloria, a valorous woman, to their beloved children, Jeannie, Sharon, Bart, Jr., Frederick, and Mary Anne. We pray that his noble spirit rest at last in peace with the angels and saints, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, forever and may Bart be forever in the presence of the God he loved and whose good servant he so nobly was.

**Joseph R. Stanton, M.D.**

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