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Acceptance of *Linacre Quarterly* Award

Dolores V. Horan

Dennis J. Horan received the Thomas Linacre Award posthumously from the National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds at its annual meeting on Sept. 23, 1989 at the Adam's Mark Hotel in Houston, Texas. This is the acceptance speech made by his wife, Dolores Volini Horan, upon the presentation of the award.



*The Word became flesh
and made his dwelling among us,
and we have seen his glory:
the glory of an only Son coming from the Father,
filled with enduring love.*

.....

*Of his fullness
we have all had a share —
love following upon love.*

The scripture words describe the model, the legacy of love, embodied in our faith, lived, and then left to us by my deceased husband, Dennis Horan. It was also the legacy left by my father, Dr. Italo Volini, who died in 1950.

My children and I thank you on Dennis's behalf for this award.

In preparing to speak to you doctors and your families, I realized how similar Dennis and my father were. There was a pattern in their lives,

infused by love, which I shared as Dennis's wife and Dr. Volini's daughter. I am truly blessed!

They both loved poetry. My father headed the Dante Alighieri Society in Chicago. One of my experiences as a teenager was struggling one night with the assignment to memorize Wordsworth's poem "Thanatopsis". My dad, checking my homework, glanced at the title of the long poem and proceeded to recite it from memory, beginning to end. Dennis, too, was always reading and writing poetry. Some of his poems were published.

They were both generous of their time in the service of humanity. My father cared for countless priests and nuns for many years without charge, even though he had 10 children at home whose voracious appetites he had to satisfy. When I told one of Dennis's friends that I would be speaking to you about him, the friend reminded me of Dennis's extensive pro bono work. In particular, he reminded me of how Dennis waged a legal battle for the friend's son. The boy had been unsuccessful in gaining entrance into medical school because of reverse discrimination. After much effort on Dennis's part in pursuing the case, the boy was admitted. Today he is the head of the Department of Pediatrics and Neurology at the State University of New York in Buffalo.

It was their love for people that enabled Dennis and my father to accept patiently the burden of being administrators, suffering, as I suppose every administrator does, the inevitable warring factions. My father was Dean at Stritch School of Medicine in Chicago at one time, and the Vice President and Chairman of the Division of Internal Medicine of the Cook County Graduate School of Medicine. Dennis was the chairman of his law firm which tripled in size during his tenure.

They both loved to teach, in school and at home. My father taught Internal Medicine at Stritch School of Medicine for many years. Dennis taught trial practice at the University of Chicago Law School. Their students remember them fondly and sometimes stop me on the street to tell me.

Both were prolific authors in their professions: there were some 44 articles authored or co-authored by my father listed in *Index Medicus*. Dennis published many articles and books, too.

I don't know that my father was a fighter. But I know his father was. In my grandfather's, Dr. Camillo Volini's obituary, it was reported that after he came to this country from Italy, he organized the "White Hand Society" to fight the "Black Hand", a terrorist group oppressing the immigrants. Oral tradition has it that grandfather only stopped his public fight when his family's house — he had six children — was bombed.

We know Dennis was a fighter, because as a trial lawyer, he had to be. And because he entered the pro-life battlefield and never thought to leave it. Dennis entered the pro-life battlefield in 1967 with his brother-in-law, Dr. Bart Heffernan, at his side. Bart is in Fort Lauderdale now. He and his wife, Dr. Gloria Volini Heffernan, are struggling to help Florida Governor Martinez. Martinez has taken a courageous stand by calling for a special

session of the legislature to enact pro-life legislation. The legislation was made possible by the recent decision of the United States Supreme Court in the *Webster* case.

The *Linacre Quarterly* article which has won Dennis the 1989 Thomas Linacre Award is entitled, "Hydration, Nutrition and Euthanasia: Legal Reflections on the Role of Church Teaching." Dennis's message is that some theologians, in advising courts and legislators, have proposed the withdrawal of nutrition and hydration from non-terminally ill patients. These theologians aver that this conduct is acceptable within the Church's teaching on euthanasia. Dennis says that these theologians should beware because public policy will not be able to preserve the distinction they make between deliberate starvation of non-terminal patients and more direct means of killing patients. Dennis's thought was acknowledged, if not adopted, in an article entitled "The End of Human Life" by Father Michael D. Place, an advisor of Cardinal Bernardin, in the quarterly publication, *Chicago Studies*.

Although Dennis has passed away, he's still fighting the pro-life fight: he left behind an organization he founded, Americans United for Life, AUL for short. Based in Chicago, with a staff of seven attorneys, AUL is the only pro-life organization whose staff devotes full time to the legal aspects of "life" issues. It has formulated a comprehensive legal strategy for restoring legal protection to the unborn; it drafts model legislation to protect unborn human life. It is filing briefs in all three abortion cases before the Supreme Court this fall, and in the euthanasia case of *Cruzan*.

Dennis was instrumental in having a priest-lawyer, Father William Grogan, join the staff at the law firm where Dennis was chairman, so that Father could become more knowledgeable in legal and ethical pro-life issues. This recalls many Sunday afternoons when I was growing up. Father John Clifford, the moral theologian at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary in Mundelein, Illinois, would meet with my father to discuss medical-ethical problems at length.

It was my mother who served them dinner, making the way easier for them. She was the one who told the story of my father, wakened in the middle of the night and dressing to go out to treat a needy patient. He said in Italian (he translated it then for her): "This is the way of the cross." It was mother who reported to Dennis and me that my father had publicly spoken out against both abortion and euthanasia before he died in 1950.

That's the way it was, and I hope that's the way it will continue to be.

We must strive to hand on this legacy of love which as St. Thomas said, "follows all understanding," to our children and other young people who will be here when we too have passed away, so that the pro-life fight will continue to be waged, whether or not it is ever won. What is important is that the statement was made, that the Word went out.
