



DAWN PARKOT WITH KRIS PARONTO AT THE GUARDIAN OF THE FAMILY ANNUAL GALA

Guardian of the Family Annual Gala

On November 14, 2016, members of the Climb Organization Board had the pleasure of attending the Guardian of the Family Annual Gala held by the New Jersey Family Policy Council. The event was held at The Venetian in Garfield, NJ. This is an absolutely beautiful venue and the attentive staff spared no effort seeing to every detail of the evening.

Len Deo, founder and President of the New Jersey Family Policy Council had asked Dawn to prepare some brief comments on what motivates her in “Doing The Right Thing” especially with regard to the Climb Organization’s advocacy work on the New Jersey Physician-Assisted Suicide Bill. She had prepared a talk that was to be limited to five minutes and she would be the opening speaker to the keynote speaker, who is a true American hero, Kris Paranto - “Tanto”. Tanto, his radio call sign and nickname, is one of the brave security contractors who attempted to rescue US Ambassador Christopher Stevens from the attack on the US embassy in Benghazi, Libya. Dawn was very honored to be his “opening act”.

Shortly into the dinner program, Len introduced Dawn. Her speaking device performed flawlessly, and her talk even caused a lot of laughs. As she was looking for the sound tech to disconnect her device, Len spoke from the rostrum and announced an award was to be presented.

To her surprise, she received the New Jersey Family Policy Council’s Family, Faith & Freedom Award. Dawn was completely overwhelmed both by Len’s very kind words describing the Climb Organization’s efforts opposing physician-assisted suicide and the generous applause from the audience. It is truly gratifying and enormously encouraging to be singled out for this organization’s efforts when all too often, we encounter entrenched opposing opinions. In our heart, we believe that we are only doing what we are called to do. Dawn will remain forever grateful to the New Jersey Family Policy Council for their beautiful award and their generous support of The Climb Organization.

Then Kris Paranto took to the stage. His story is detailed in the book and movie, “13 Hours: The Secret Soldiers of Benghazi”. Chris held the complete attention of the audience with his personal and emotional account of the fighting that raged both at the embassy and the CIA outpost he was charged to protect.



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Dawn Parkot delivering her speech.



Kris Paronto speaking about the Battle of Benghazi.



Dawn Parkot with Kris Paronto

These brave men disobeyed orders to mount a rescue at the embassy. The personal honor and love for their brother warriors was evident. It is comforting to know that there are still men like Kris who embody the values and traditions of the US military and are willing to sacrifice everything in defense of these noble ideals. Kris, a former Army Ranger spoke with an energy and intensity that still moves Dawn. To her, it was indeed a privilege just to share a speaker's platform with him and meet him personally. This was a night that Dawn will always cherish.



[Dawn's Speech from the Event](#)

Good evening everyone. I would like to thank Len for giving me this incredible opportunity to speak with you tonight. He asked me to talk about what motivates me in the fight against physician assisted suicide legislation.

As a graduate from the University of Notre Dame, we are expected by our Alma Mater to do the right thing and make a difference in the world. All of us are expected to be a minister, educator and professional, which includes serving as a public and visible role model within our communities.

One of the ways I strive to serve my community is to educate the world on disabled life issues, and demonstrate to everyone that the disabled, and in particular the extremely disabled can

have a full, successful, joyful, busy and meaningful life. That was one of the reasons I founded The Climb Organization.

I started out speaking with children about some of my experiences and providing some motivation to go after their dreams. The students love to hear about my real life adventures as a competitive equestrian, beauty pageant winner and college student. I know I have changed some of their perceptions. This was just about the most fulfilling thing I had ever done.

So as I'm presenting this very positive message, I was stunned when the State of Florida decided they could execute Terri Schiavo because she was disabled and could not speak for herself. Until this point, I believed that the pro-life movement fought to protect pre born children from Planned Parenthood.

My advocacy for the sanctity of life until we are called by God led me to a wonderful friendship with Bobby Schindler, Terry's brother and a true pro-life hero. I think of Terry and her death at the hands of the State of Florida every time I take on this current fight for life.

A duty of my organization is fighting against legislation that is harmful to the rights of disabled citizens. It seems to me that today, in this country, we care more about the rights of murderers, child molesters, terrorists, and animals, than the rights of our disabled citizens. All individuals with a disability are at risk and we remain one of the few groups of people where discrimination is viewed as socially and legally acceptable. Many states retain laws that deny basic rights to those deemed "extremely disabled". Even those individuals with adequate support often spend their adult life in poorly supported institutions and group homes.

The pending physician-assisted suicide legislation lets another individual, other than the patient

introduce the lethal medication. Someone else can put the pills in the patient's mouth. Someone else can put the drug in a feeding tube or IV nutrition bag. There is no independent witness required at the time of ingestion, so who would know? The mere presence of a lethal drug request would provide an alibi for conspirators.

In the bill, "Capable" means having the capacity to make health care decisions and to communicate them to a health care provider, including communication through persons familiar with the patient's manner of communicating. Simply, legislation makes it possible for someone to speak for the person if they are familiar with the person's manner of communicating. If I am denied access to my communication device someone speaking for me could successfully end my life under this bill. My amusing brother who has witnessed my sometimes single minded, all-encompassing passion against this bill reminds me that when the time comes, he'll gladly administer the fatal cocktail and end his suffering! I guess it gets a little crazy at home when I become too focused.

I find the real world application of this bill to be one more chance for bullying sick, elderly, disabled or depressed people into prematurely ending their lives. I took on a neighborhood bully when I was about 12-years-old. This teen aged hooligan terrorized much younger kids on the block. When I had finally seen enough, I planned my attack with the precision of a defensive end taking out a scrambling quarterback. I waited on my driveway with my powered wheel chair. The bully was cruising on his bike, and looking for his next victim, while I was calculating my angle of interception. At just the right moment, I powered up my chair and slammed into the bike. Who knew that power wheelchairs have ramming speed?

The bully ended up on his butt in the street not sure of what hit him. I circled him once and he then got up and walked his somewhat bent bike home.

So I guess this is where, I should end this presentation. What motivates me is my duty to God and my beloved Alma Mater. In addition, I never could walk away from a good fight and I will keep fighting, until I win. Thank you.

Changing the Culture of Death to the Culture of LIFE

Dawn was requested by Ivette Valori, the Middle School Faith Formation Coordinator at Notre Dame of Mount Carmel Church to come and speak on the topic "the dignity and sanctity of human life". For three nights during the first week of December, Dawn spoke with the entire 6th, 7th and 8th grade student body. The students appreciated listening to her and asking her questions. They were actually astounded and enthused by the fact that an individual with Dawn's disabilities can live a successful life, achieve so much, and influence numerous people very positively.

By the students' comments that Dawn received during her presentation and after the class:

- She taught them that ALL life is precious.
- She inspired them to get involved with the pro-life movement.
- She taught them that one person could make a difference, as evidenced by her time in Trenton and at the University of Notre Dame.
- She taught them to be more compassionate toward their grandparents, and others.
- She taught them not to judge by outer looks.
- She inspired them to prevent bullying.
- She gave them a sense of self-worth: "If she can be successful, so can they".
- She taught them to dream dreams -- and how to achieve them.
- She taught them not to be discouraged when obstacles are put in front of them.
- She sent them home with life-long lessons.

"Everyone was truly touched in some magnificent way", said Ivette Valori.



On December 5, 2016 - Marilyn Hudson and Dawn receiving comments and questions from the students.



The New Jersey Statehouse



Dawn Parkot waits in a State House Annex hallway with disability advocate Kate Blisard on October 20, 2016 during the Advocacy Day event.

A Little Drama at the Statehouse

After a good day lobbying against the Physician-Assisted Suicide Bill during the Advocacy Day on October 20, 2016, Dawn was requested to testify in front of the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee opposing the legislation.

On November 3rd, Marilyn Hudson, Sean Parkot and Dawn arrived at the Café in the Statehouse. They waited patiently in the Café, while chatting with many of their associates, and with folks who were going to testify against the assisted suicide bill. A little after noon, they had to run to the Senate Committee Room, because Compassion & Choices, the biggest supporters of the bill, were having a press Conference and they wanted to make their presence known.

The opposition to the bill started the day believing the hearing was for discussion only and that the committee wasn't going to vote on the bill. The opposition took that to be good news, because it could mean

that there was a question about having the votes to release the bill from committee.

The opposition coalition entered the Senate Committee Room at about noon, with no indication of when the session would convene. The room was overcrowded. The decibel level was exceedingly high, with no let-up. Then, the opposition coalition found out that, somehow the senators had enough "yes" votes to get the legislation through the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee, and that the committee would be voting that day.

After about an hour of the unending noise, all present were told that the hearings would be held in a larger Committee Room on the fourth floor. (They were initially on the first floor.) So, the crowd poured out of the initial room and made its way to the fourth floor via the elevators. Folks were beginning to show signs of fatigue and hints of stress.

Sean, Dawn and Marilyn boarded elevator #2 along with three women, who were in support of the bill. As they pressed the button for floor 4, the elevator "jerked" a bit, and then they began to wonder if they were moving. Actually, the elevator was stuck, and they were trapped! They sounded the alarm, banged on the door, and finally used the elevator phone to call for help. Help was to arrive in "a few minutes". It was more like 8 or 10 minutes before they were freed.

John Kelly, with "Not Dead Yet", asked the legislative aide to the Health & Human Services Committee, for an accommodation for Kate Blisard (with CP too) and Dawn to speak first, and the aide agreed with him. John Kelly was worried about the charge running out on Dawn's speaking device, just like it did two years ago. It was about two o'clock when the hearings finally began. Kate and Dawn never got their

accommodation. That's how the game goes. Kate and Dawn did their best without having their accommodation.

Several people testified against the bill. One of them was Stephanie Packer who flew in from California to share her story and ask the Senators to vote NO for the legislation. She is a 34-year-old terminally ill wife and mother suffering from scleroderma, who was denied her treatment after California legalized assisted suicide. The health insurance company said they wouldn't pay for her treatment, but they would be more than happy to pay for the lethal drugs to end her life. Stephanie has an unwavering will to live.

Then the committee addressed other bills before resuming testimony on the assisted suicide bill. The chairman informed the speakers that they would have a minute or so, but if they repeat what someone else said, he would cut them off instantaneously. It was nearly 4 PM

before Dawn's group was called up. She was determined not to get cut short, (as has happened in the past), so on a very low charge, she abbreviated her testimony to include only the highlights which were not previously mentioned. She did this just minutes before being called up. To Dawn, that moment was not about her or the Climb Organization. That moment was about getting the truth out about the bill and saving lives.

Her testimony was brief, direct and compelling, as described by others. After Dawn, a 24-year-old Rutgers student spoke. She stressed the impact that this bill would have on the young medical students of her generation. She cited the conflict between taking the Hippocratic oath and being obliged to offer suicide assistance. She, and others, were very effective.

After Kate and Dawn exited the Senate Committee Room, a reporter with a newspaper ran after Dawn and wanted her info and a copy of her testimony. After that Marie Tasy,

from NJ Right to Life came out of the Committee Room to congratulate Kate Blisard and Dawn for their "on the mark" testimonies. They were giving each other high fives. Marie seemed pleased that Dawn didn't get cut off again.

Even the chairman gave Dawn the time to go after Compassion & Choices' lead argument for this legislation: that of unbearable end of life pain is a canard. The fear of disability is the significant factor that drives this bill. She was very glad to have the time to call out Compassion & Choices publically on their lie. Dawn wanted to do that for years.

Sean, Dawn and Marilyn left the Statehouse at about 4:30 PM, Marilyn learned the next morning that the committee approved the bill (by a 5-3 vote, with one abstention) for a full Senate vote. The Climb Organization is hoping the bill will get killed in the Senate in January of 2018, as happened last year.

The Senate Health & Human Services Committee members voted:

Vitale, Joseph F. - Chair	732-855-7441	SenVitale@njleg.org	YES
Madden, Fred H. - Vice-Chair	856-232-6700	SenMadden@njleg.org	NO
Addiego, Dawn Marie	609-654-1498	SenAddiego@njleg.org	YES
Allen, Diane B.	856-314-8835	SenAllen@njleg.org	Abstained
Codey, Richard J.	973-535-5017	SenCodey@njleg.org	YES
Gordon, Robert M.	201-703-9779	SenGordon@njleg.org	YES
Rice, Ronald L.	973-371-5665	SenRice@njleg.org	NO
Singer, Robert W.	732-987-5669	SenSinger@njleg.org	NO
Whelan, Jim	609-383-1388	SenWhelan@njleg.org	YES

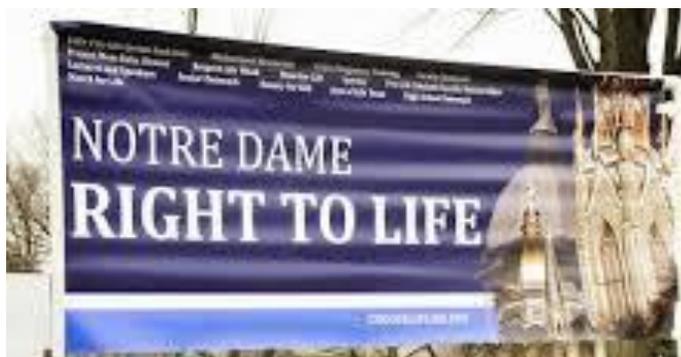
Please feel free to call or e-mail to tell them what you think about the Physician Assisted Suicide Bill. It was a long drama packed day, but Dawn's work is far from over.

Since Dawn testified, she has lobbied a few times with NJ Right to Life and other groups. In addition, Jersey Statehouse. She has been working with the New Jersey Family

Policy Council to personally meet in legislator's offices to explain why they should vote down this legislation.



On January 27, 2017 - The 44th Annual March for Life in Washington, D.C.



March for Life in Washington, D.C.

The Fighting Irish Fight for Life

The 44th Annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., drew hundreds of thousands of peaceful pro-life supporters. More than 700 students came from Notre Dame, Saint Mary's and Holy Cross College.

First, the crew from Notre Dame and Dawn attended mass at 10am at St. Agnes Church, which was packed full. The University's president, Father Jenkins presided over the mass. The previous president of Notre Dame, Father Malloy was there too. At Communion, he dashed right over to Dawn to give her Communion. He did the similar thing at her class reunion two years ago. She guesses he still remembers her.

For the first time, the sitting vice president of the United States took part. He brought the best wishes of the president and delivered a speech pledging the new administration's commitment to the cause of life.



Vice President Mike Pence addressing the Pro-Life supporters at the March for Life 2017.

Vice President Mike Pence electrified the hundreds of thousands in attendance who stood beneath the shadow of the iconic Washington monument and filled the National Mall. However, the crew from South Bend and Dawn couldn't hear him, because they couldn't get to the middle of the National Mall. All that they could do was walk around it.

The meeting place for the University of Notre Dame marchers had to change on the fly, because of

the huge crowd. All of them eventually found each other.

Dawn marched with 20 guys from Notre Dame and all of them wanted to know all about her, and about the Physician-Assisted Suicide bill. She talked so much that she needed to change her speaking device's batteries after the march.

There was a reception after the march for Notre Dame staff, faculty, alumni and friends that took place at the National Press Club. Dawn spoke to Carter Snead, who is the Director of the Center for Ethics and Culture, Professor of Law in the Law School, and Concurrent Professor of Political Science at the University of Notre Dame. He would like her to come to Notre Dame to speak about the New Jersey Physician Assisted Suicide bill. Dawn is definitely excited about that upcoming speaking engagement.

The Climb Organization Inc.

7 Terry Drive
Morristown, New Jersey 07960