



**A C T I V I S M**

# THE AMERICAN FEMINIST

**Feminists for Life of America**



## CAROL N. CROSSED

HERE IS NO CAUSE in defense of life for which Carol Nan Crossed does not fight. Long before the consistent life ethic appeared in ethical, religious, and (finally) mainstream journals, Crossed expected consistency from herself as well as others. Calling herself “the consistent bystander” in a column she writes for *Harmony*, Crossed is rarely a bystander in real life. She believes, “If it is true that violence begets violence, maybe it is true that peace begets peace.” The same determination that propelled her into the civil rights movement four decades ago continues to carry her into related issues such as the Nestle Boycott, the Nuclear Freeze, pro-peace efforts from Viet Nam to the Persian Gulf to Iraq, and opposition to the death penalty. She believes, “In a very real sense, abortion and capital punishment stand in the way of more creative and responsible treatment of crime and of unwanted pregnancy.”

After the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973, Crossed intensified her work against the violence of abortion. In a speech she gave to the City Club of Cleveland commemorating the decision’s twenty-fifth anniversary (reprinted in *Harmony* 2/99), Crossed asked, “As we stare at our reflection, what do we see after 25 years of a journey of death, a weeping trail of women and their unborn children, on this anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision?” She went on to state, “Now, as then, we have a judicial, legal and medical house of cards where laws are vulnerable to the definitions that a more powerful class chooses to make over a less powerful class... We look at our reflection and see a society whose very humanitarian tenets are violated by the abortion license.” Crossed believes that “Abortion is based on a world view of control and domination, rather than one of inclusivity and equality.” Since the 1970s, Feminists for Life has been the organization that claimed her strongest ardor.

It championed the people she treasured the most: women and their unborn children. “The abortion license has created an adversarial role not only between women and their children, but between women and men, and between women and society... Instead of a right to choose, abortion has become a women’s right to lose.”

Often the recipient of awards, Crossed is weary when people shower her with admiration. She prefers that they roll up their sleeves and help. She loves it if they do it publicly.

Crossed’s infamous “Let’s have coffee” invitations have allowed her persuasive gentleness and wisdom to change many an opinion. But she prefers a larger platform. Whether she writes letters and opinion pieces, appears on radio and television, joins legal protests, or performs acts of civil disobedience at places where death happens (resulting in 13 arrests), the public arena stimulates Crossed in her steadfast efforts against violence and injustice. She is currently taking leadership in the political arena by serving as president of Democrats for Life of America. “We in a ‘civilized’ society must have other options to cope with personal, economic and social pressures, than to destroy one another. We have to.”

Crossed also lives her beliefs at home. When her six children were young, they shared rooms with occasional immigrants from El Salvador, recently released prisoners, or young pregnant girls with nowhere to turn. Today the house teems with the joy of eight grandchildren and their parents.

Each day presents Crossed with a new battle, a new chance to change the world. The latest one, her own struggle against breast cancer, seems to be a blip on her horizon. It is serving not as an excuse for reclusion but as a reminder that time is wasting and there are many lives to save while she lets doctors help save hers. ○

REMARKABLE PRO-LIFE WOMEN III