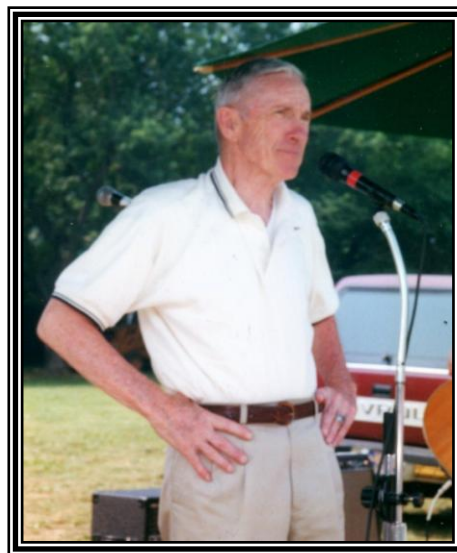




88 Pennsylvania Avenue, Oreland, PA, 19075

*John Patrick Stanton*

July 7, 1927 – January 31, 2014



Dear Friends-

In the days following John Stanton's death, the Pro-Life Union has been flooded with so many kind words from supporters, coworkers and friends of John. His untiring efforts to protect the unborn and restore a deep respect for the sanctity of every life have had a tremendous impact. Those of us in the office had the great joy of working with John every day. We miss his joyful presence, his smile and the stories he shared about his loving family. John loved music, and his favorite songs and hymns often played in the background while he worked.

John was guided by a deep love of God and a strong prayer life. He was courageous and led by example. He prayed weekly outside of the local abortion facilities and witnessed regularly at area hospitals. In 2007, he helped a family who had chosen life to rebuild their home and he maintained a beautiful relationship with the family, offering tangible support whenever it was needed. Three years ago, he helped to refurbish a new Center City Pregnancy Center. He visited the Center weekly and delivered material assistance.

John was involved in the fight to stop abortion well before its legalization through Roe v. Wade. He continued to use his gifts to convince citizens to become involved in pro-life activities and encouraged them to speak with their local, state, and national figures to protect women and children from abortion. He carried educational brochures with him at all times so he could share the humanity of the unborn child with those he encountered. He embraced positive change and was encouraged by how social media was being used to communicate on life issues. John was passionate about reaching out to abortion-minded women through advertising campaigns. He cared deeply for women wounded by abortion and shared the message of God's mercy, love and healing.

John was truly the father of the Pennsylvania Pro-Life Movement. In 1971, he founded the Pro-Life Coalition, which is now the Pro-Life Union of Greater Philadelphia. We are profoundly grateful that he continued his service here until his final days. Without exception, every pro-life organization turned to him for his advice, knowledge, leadership and wisdom. The following tributes from those touched by John's life of service give homage to the impact of his extraordinary life.



### Tributes



*"For over 30 years, John Stanton was the face of the Pro – Life Movement in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. He was a loyal son of God and the Church, who put his faith in action by tirelessly defending the lives of unborn children. In doing so, he never forgot to treat those who opposed him with dignity and love. John will always be warmly remembered by the Pro–Life community here in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia for his generosity in the service of life. May the Lord rise up to meet John in heaven and hold him in the palm of His hand for all eternity."*

**Archbishop Charles Chaput**

*"As I look back at my relatively short tenure directing Respect Life activities here in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, I remember the welcome I received from John Stanton and his willingness to be of service to what I wanted to accomplish here. I relied on John to understand the history of the pro-life movement here; I relied on him for advice and guidance. I soon considered him the wise granddad that I could go to at any time to get a straight answer. I will miss John and his wisdom as all of us in the Pro Life community will. But I know that he is working with us still, in the presence of God, Whom he loved and served and in the presence of all the babies he tried to save and couldn't. God be with him now and for all eternity."*

**Steve Bozza, Director, Office of Life and Family**

## Tributes (continued)

*“Very recently, I was at a dinner during which pro-life testimonies and stories were shared and I had the honor of sitting next to John. A video of a young couple who had considered abortion, yet chose life, was shown to the room. I turned to John to comment on the video, and he had tears in his eyes. He really felt that message of the power of the Holy Spirit and the sanctity of life. And I think that is what set John apart from so many others - being pro-life was not just a cause or an advocacy opportunity for him. John was living his life to save the lives of others. He was emotionally, spiritually and intellectually pro-life. To say that he will be missed - by those of us that are pro-life and also those that he spent his life defending - would be an understatement. May God welcome this good and faithful servant into His Eternal Kingdom.”*

**Bob O’Hara, Executive Director, PA Catholic Conference**

*“Merely spending time in his presence challenged and inspired me. Mr. Stanton was a hero, mentor, role model and grandfather-figure to me. He was a true man and utter gentleman. He imaged St. Joseph in his humility, kindness, and courage. He was unwavering. He revered me by his chivalry and taught me so very much about my value and dignity. He was not only the patriarch of the pro-life movement in Greater Philadelphia and beyond, but was also a stellar witness of a man of faith, hope, love and joy! He loved his Catholic faith and his family. He was ready to die to defend those great loves.”*

**Cristina Barba, Executive Director Generation Life**

*“The pro-life movement in Pennsylvania lost a pillar in our “community” of allies committed to defending the sanctity of human life and working against the culture of death. In fact, he was a pioneer in the pro-life movement, even before it became known as such, even before the infamous Roe v. Wade abortion decision. And his legacy is not only political and cultural, but is alive and well in three generations of his own family in Philadelphia and beyond.”*

**Tom Shaheen, VP for Policy, Pa Family Institute**

*“John Stanton was an inspiration to me in many ways. He demonstrated the deep value of persistence and faithfulness in standing up to the evil of abortion. He radiated love for the lives impacted by abortion — the baby, the mother and the father. And he rightfully bristled with indignation at the failure of government officials to carry out their most basic responsibility: to protect innocent human life. John Stanton’s life epitomized the Scripture verse from Micah 6:8 – He sought justice, embraced mercy, and walked humbly before God and man.”*

**Michael Geer, President of Pennsylvania Family Institute**

*“John lived out his life in a most exemplary way. He lived as a husband, a father of twelve, grandfather of 46, great-grandfather of 15, a defender of the most vulnerable, a patriot, a warrior, a selfless giver, a true man and a great credit to his Irish heritage. He knelt down to pray the rosary, not on a padded kneeler but instead among the spit, dirt and tar of Philadelphia’s sidewalks. He persisted for years and never gave up trying to move the seemingly immovable in political and legislative circles. He held high the treasure of his God, his wife, his family, his Faith, his country, his heritage and was willing to die for them so that they each in turn may also live and die for them. We should be so blessed to look back at a life so well lived.”*

**Jack and Pat O’Brien, Chester County Pro-Life Coalition**

*“John Stanton’s inspiration and example will live on for generations. We admired his humble, diligent perseverance throughout all his endeavors on behalf of Life. Let everyone ask, as we continue facing the uphill battle protecting Life - WWJD - What would John do? R.I.P.”*

**Barbara Murray, Pro-Life Union of Delaware County**

*“John Stanton was a role model for all men, especially Catholics. It is for us, his friends in the pro-life and pro-family movement, to rededicate ourselves to carry on his work and in that way honor the legacy of this great Catholic man.”*

**William Miller, Bucks County Pro-Life Coalition**

*“John was much more than a pro-life pioneer - he was a model Catholic man who took the time to mentor the younger pro-life generation -not so much in words, but by his faithful daily witness did he provide us leadership. I was fortunate enough to be a recipient of such an example for the past 10 years. I hope and pray my witness can be as strong an influence when my work is completed on this earth.”*

**Mark Houck, Founder of The King’s Men, Inc.**

*“I’d like to express my sincere condolences on the passing of your founder. I was saddened to learn that we had lost such a great champion for life. He was a pillar for Pennsylvania’s Pro-Life Community. As founder of the Pro-Life Union of Greater Philadelphia, John touched the lives of countless individuals as he fought to defend the sanctity of every life. He will certainly rest in peace, knowing that, with your help, he educated countless citizens on the preciousness of life, emphasized the importance of family and promoted alternatives and support services.”*

**Senator Patrick Toomey**

## Pro-life, before there was pro-life

From the Bucks County Courier Times: By J.D. Mullane

Before there was a pro-life movement in Pennsylvania, there was John Stanton, who launched it here in 1971. That was two years before the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision, which legalized abortion.

For more than 40 years, he fought for the unborn, enduring assaults, ridicule and prison. His fight ended on Jan. 31, when he died after heart surgery in Philadelphia. He was 86. The son of Irish Catholic immigrants, the father of 12, the grandfather of 46, and the great-grandfather of 16, he lived in Jenkintown with his wife, Harriet, to whom he was married for 63 years. He was a reader of this column, and my uncle.

He told me at a family gathering last summer that he knew in the late 1960s what legalized abortion would bring to America, and he could not stand by. He founded an organization known today as the Pro-Life Union of Greater Philadelphia. Over all these years, he stood outside abortion clinics and hospitals and prayed, sometimes alone, for the mothers and the children lost. Counter demonstrators mocked and insulted him. He was slapped, shoved and punched.

Forty years before Pope Francis spoke of wanting a Catholic Church "that is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out in the streets," John Stanton was bruised, hurting and dirty in the streets, witnessing the faith.

Once, he took on members of the Warlocks, the outlaw motorcycle club. Outside an abortion clinic in Center City, a trio of Warlocks kept kicking down his "Choose Life" sign. He went up to them and warned them not to do it again. He was a slight man, but had a powerful presence. The Warlocks rode off, leaving the sign intact.

After organizing Catholics to pray the rosary outside clinics throughout the area, and after pleading with women entering the clinics not to abort their children, he was indicted under federal RICO anti-racketeering statutes. In court, the judge gave him a choice. Admit guilt, pay a fine and walk free, or go to prison. He chose prison. Given these batterings, it would be natural to become bitter, but Uncle John never did.

When a counter-demonstrator lobbed a can of Mace at him, the demonstrator was arrested and charged with assault. In court, Uncle John dropped the charges against him. His faith commanded him to a difficult standard. Mercy is shown to those who are merciful.

Long before anyone had heard of abortion doctor Kermit Gosnell, Uncle John had stood outside Gosnell's clinic in West Philadelphia for 11 years, praying. Last year, when Gosnell was convicted and sent to prison for murdering three newborns and for the death of one of his abortion patients, Uncle John told me: "We pray for his soul."

Some years ago on a winter afternoon over lunch at the Dallas Diner in Bristol Township, I asked him why he kept at it. Why did he sacrifice so much of his life for a cause that seemed a goner in a regressive culture? I've never forgotten his response: "Faith costs." He paid the price, but not in vain.

The week he died, news broke that abortions are at the lowest levels in the U.S. since 1973. While there are many reasons for this, among them wider use of birth control and loss of stigma for unmarried women to have children, a Chicago Tribune editorial cites an under-reported cause, and it should give great hope to pro-lifers.

"Young people," the Tribune reports, "are also more likely to find abortion morally troublesome. A Gallup poll last year found that Americans aged 18-34 are more likely than any other age group to say abortion should be illegal in all circumstances." Sonograms and ultrasounds have a lot to do with this. The stunning fact that one in three Americans has been aborted since 1973 is another. But those lonely vigils outside clinics that John Stanton and people like him across the country have endured since *Roe v. Wade* are also the reason Americans are having a change of heart.



May God hold you in the palm of His hand.



*From John's personal  
letterhead.*

## Enduring Faithfulness

- *Patrick Stanton*

My father grasped the importance of having a consistent pro-life presence at abortion facilities. It pained Pop to watch women stream into cold buildings to have the life of their unborn child taken. But, throughout his life he remained deeply committed to this activity because it is a powerful witness against the injustice of abortion. Pop sensed that the time spent praying and giving witness is a time of amazing grace.

We have lost 56 million human beings to abortion. Our world has been completely changed by Roe v. Wade, we are a wounded country. Pop sacrificed, fasted, worked and gave up so much, because he believed fundamentally that with God's help and grace, we could and would make a difference. As long as abortion remains legal, the pro-life community will be there to reach out to mothers. Our faith and our humanity demand that we make one last plea to save women from the tragic decision of abortion. We have to be there for the unborn children in danger of losing their lives. Pop's last word to every mother was usually "mercy." He wanted to extend mercy to the mothers, the babies and the workers. He was faithful always, kind and compassionate and completely prayerful. He made a difference. And, together all of us can continue his work.

A few weeks before Pop passed away, the Pro Life Union Board determined to increase attendance at two area abortion facilities. Planned Parenthood in Center City and the Philadelphia Women's Center are two of the busiest abortion companies in this area. As you reflect on the tribute to him and the life he led, he would ask you to please consider making a commitment to being a witness at an abortion facility. Don't stand on the sidelines while the greatest assault on human dignity in our time is taking place on the streets of our cities and towns.

We are lining up captains for Saturdays. Our goal is to have a consistent presence from 7 am until 8:30 am every Saturday. If you have never prayed outside of an abortion facility before, and you don't know what to expect, call the PLU and we can answer any questions. Brochures to distribute are available from the office. We are keeping a running list and are confident that with Pop's help, and the sacrifice of each one of you reading this, we will have every Saturday covered. For information and to commit to a Saturday, call the Pro-Life Union or email us at [mail@prolifeunion.org](mailto:mail@prolifeunion.org).

## The John & Harriet Stanton Leadership Fund



At the 2013 Stand Up for Life Dinner, the Pro-Life Union announced the establishment of the John & Harriet Stanton Leadership Fund to honor the contributions of John and Harriet Stanton. This Fund honors the heroic witness of John, and will be used to support new generations of leaders for the Pro-Life movement across our area. Our region has always been on the cutting-edge with initiatives of this nature, and the Fund will ensure we remain mindful of the need to equip new generations. The Stanton Leadership Fund supports the next generation of pro-life leaders across Greater Philadelphia through leadership training and mentorship.

The fund is permanently endowed with the Catholic Foundation of Greater Philadelphia. You can contribute to the Stanton Leadership Fund by visiting [www.giving.catholicfoundationphila.org](http://www.giving.catholicfoundationphila.org). Select "Donate Now" and under "Donation Information," choose the amount of your donation, select the "Restricted Funds" designation and "Add Donation." Then select "Pro-Life Union John & Harriet Stanton Leadership Fund" and fill out your information. Donations to the Fund may also be mailed to the Pro-Life Union – Please note in the memo line that the gift is intended for the John & Harriet Stanton Leadership Fund. Your contribution will help us train and mentor the next generation.