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**Abortion's Roe reveals unedited
life in memoirs.**

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By Kathleen Donnelly of
Knight-Ridder Newspapers**

For the past decade, Norma McCorvey has told her story in bits and pieces.

First—shaking, sick to her stomach and fortified by vodka and Valium—she told a Dallas television reporter she was Jane Roe of Roe vs. Wade, the anonymous pregnant plaintiff whose case led to the 1973 Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion.

Next, she admitted she had lied about that pregnancy in the hope it would help her get an abortion: A casual affair made her pregnant, not rape.

And, little by little, through occasional interviews, sporadic speaking engagements and a 1989 television movie, she revealed that before she gave birth to the Roe baby and gave her to adoptive parents, she had given birth to two other children (one adopted, she believes, by its father; the other adopted by McCorvey's mother). Slowly, she began speaking of her long-term lesbian relationship, her job cleaning houses, the joys of being a grandmother. But if McCorvey seemed to hold something back for herself, it's understandable. She is Roe—a woman whose very name means abortion. Depending on your point of view, she is a hero or a victim, a saint or a demon.

She is also now totally, irrevocably public, having written with journalist Andy Meisler a memoir, "I Am Roe" (HarperCollins, \$23). It leaves little out: not her childhood of petty crime and reform school, nor the affairs with lovers of both sexes, nor the nights spent drinking in Dallas dives, nor the days of low-level drug-dealing that precedes Roe.



'I AM ROE': Norma McCorvey, the "Jane Roe" of Roe vs. Wade, holds a fertility goddess and a gourd rattle possessions that accompany her on a tour to promote her memory.

By Jim Gensheimer of the San Jose Mercury News

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