Busalacchi killed

by Stephanie Bean

St. Louis, MO—Officials at Barnes Hospital, began starving Christine Busalacchi on Wednesday, February 23 after a "neurological workup" by Barnes physicians pronounced the severely disabled 22-year-old woman to be in a "persistent vegetative state." This was despite court testimony introduced earlier which stated that Christine ate food by mouth with a spoon, followed people with her eyes, laughed, sat up in a wheelchair, and showed responses to her environment. By definition, persons in a "persistent vegetative state" do none of these things.

Barnes Hospital, a teaching hospital affiliated with Washington University Medical School, also performs genetic testing to seek out disabled unborn babies, and kills them by abortion on site. Barnes physicians also admit private patients for abortions, and abortionists Darwin Jackson and Catherine Dean are professors at Washington University Medical School, with Barnes staff privileges.

The Missouri State Supreme Court denied a motion on Tuesday, February 21, to stay the execution by starvation of Christine Busalacchi. The state court was apparently unconcerned that Christine has never had a lawyer representing her interests in the 2 1/2 years of legal proceedings seeking her death, nor that Missouri state law forbids starving those who have left no "advance directive" or other evidence that they would wish to "refuse medical treatment."

According to attorneys for Elizabeth McDonald, who has attempted to intervene through the court system, the U.S. Supreme Court does not hear guardianship cases, and no other appeals are possible. No disability-rights groups have been willing to come forward and file suit in federal court.

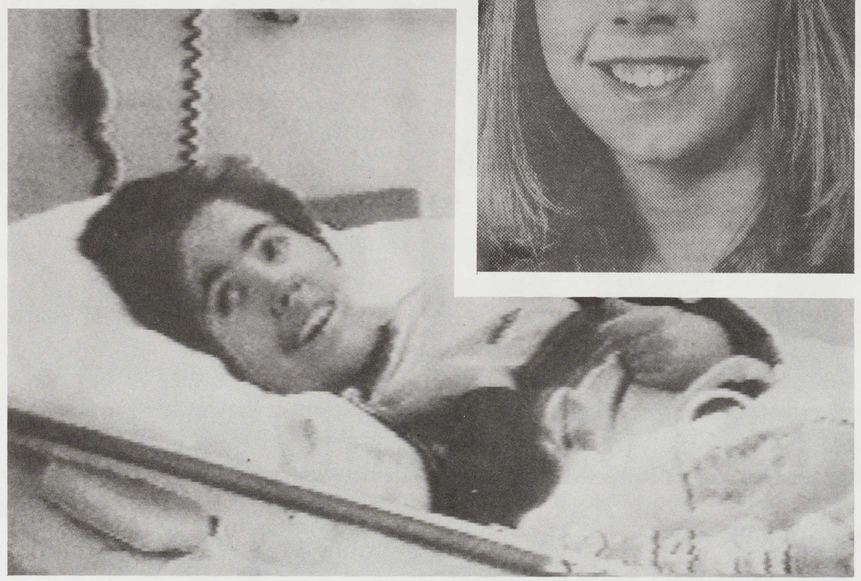
Barnes Hospital receives Medicare/Medicaid reimbursements. Pro-lifers are asked to call the following Health and Human Services officials and ask for an investigation of Barnes Hospital on two grounds:

1. Christine Busalacchi is a disabled patient who was able to eat by mouth, but is now being abused by being denied both mouth and stomach tube feedings; and

2.Physicians at Barnes have colluded to find that Christine is in a persistent vegetative state, when other physicians and court evidence have shown that she is not.

St. Louis pro-life activist McDonald appealed to the Missouri State Supreme Court for guardianship. St. Louis County Probate Judge Louis Kohn (who had previously ruled Christine to be in a "persistent vegetative state" despite copious court testimony to the contrary) denied McDonald's petition for change of guardianship.

Guardianship was sought because Christine's father, Pete Busalacchi, by seeking the death of his daughter, had failed in the first duty of a guardian, which is to safeguard the ward's well-being, and since the state had withdrawn from the case, no one else was concerned with Christine's life.



Top: Christine in high school. Bottom: Christine smiling from her hospital bed.

Earlier McDonald had filed a similar motion in the lower court. St. Louis County Circuit Judge Kintz issued a 10-day temporary restraining order forbidding Pete Busalacchi from withdrawing her food or moving her out of state. Kintz then held a hearing on McDonald's petition in chambers, rather than in the courtroom, due to the presence of approximately 10 pro-lifers in the courtroom, most of them women, saying he feared "a circus." According to McDonald's attorney, David O. Danis, two attorneys representing the state of Missouri, through Attorney General Jay Nixon, were also present in chambers, even though they had no standing in the case. Nixon had formally withdrawn from the case some weeks earlier.

According to Danis, the state's attorneys suggested to Judge Kintz that a new statute currently under consideration by the state legislature (but not yet law) be used to determine in favor of Mr. Busalacchi, since it was "likely to pass" anyway. This proposed statute would allow "substitute judgment" in "right-to-die" cases.

Kintz ruled against McDonald, and his restraining order expired Thursday, February 11, 1993. The Missouri Court of Appeals denied an extension of the temporary restraining order pending an appeal to the State Supreme Court, effectively leaving Christine without protection from starvation.

Christine Busalacchi died of deliberate starvation on March 7 at Barnes Hospital in St. Louis, Missouri.

Prior to Christine's death, about 135 pro-lifers, three in wheelchairs, rallied at Barnes to express their disgust at Barnes and their prayerful support for Christine. McDonald, who attended the rally, called Christine's death "cruel, stupid, and sinful."

Veteran St. Louis rescuer Laura Dunn commented, "It was amazing to see people's angry and hateful reactions to a simple sign that said, 'Feed Christine.'" ■

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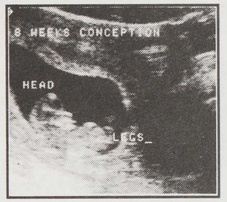
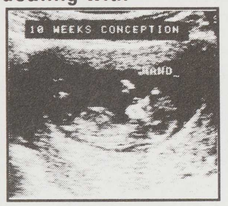
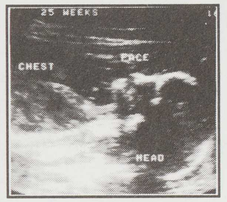


8 Weeks



10 Weeks

14 Weeks



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