Hunter and McKinzie Barton were born on July 13, 1994. Two weeks later, Barton developed a fever that indicated an advanced stage of her disease and was rushed to Stanford University Medical Center. She underwent a bone-marrow transplant on August 17. However, she developed graft verses host disease, a side-effect of the transplant.

The fight to save her life ended when she died on January 22 — leaving the twins to the care of her husband, Jeff. ■

Gunn

Gunn's family sues for "wrongful death" and "negligence"

Pensacola, FL — The family of abortionist David Gunn, who was killed almost two years ago at Pensacola Women's Medical Services abortion clinic, is suing the clinic, claiming that employees failed to ensure his safety, attorneys said on February 22.

"This lawsuit is not about the abortion issue. (It) is a straightforward wrongful death suit for failure of the defendant to accord protection to people lawfully on its premises," said Pensacola attorney Charles Cetti, who is representing the abortionist's family.

On March 10, 1993, David Gunn, 47, of Eufaula, Alabama, was shot three times in the back as he arrived for work at one of two clinics that offers abortion in Pensacola.

Michael Griffin of Pensacola was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison for Gunn's death.

Gunn's father, Peter Gunn Jr. of Benton, Kentucky, filed the lawsuit last week on behalf of his son's widow, his 23-year-old son and his daughter, 19.

Among the suit's claims are that the clinic failed to provide a security guard for Gunn, did not erect a fence to protect the doctor, and did not check Gunn's parking space to ensure no one was waiting for him.

The suit also claims clinic personnel knew or should have been aware of possible dangers faced by Gunn because of the presence of protesters before he arrived for work, clinic workers' knowledge that he had received death threats, and numerous newspaper articles about abortion-related violence during the nine years before the shooting, among other things.

In a separate action, Pensacola abortion opponents Mike and Vicky Conroy of Legal Action for Women, a group which helps abortion-injured mothers to sue abortionists and clinics, have also filed a lawsuit in state court, asking a judge to nullify a new local statute creating no-protest zones around city abortion clinics.

The couple claim the eight-foot buffer zones outside clinics may hinder their First Amendment rights to speak against abortion and distribute literature.

The suit seeks a temporary injunction against enforcement of the ordinance creating the zones, as well as a permanent ruling that the zones are unconstitutional.

The Pensacola City Council passed the buffer zone ordinance on January 26, six months after a second abortion-related murder in the northern Florida city.

The Conroys claim in their suit that the zones violate the federal Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances law, which makes it a crime to block access to a reproductive health clinic or to use force or threats against people using the clinics.

The couple claim they are protected by the federal act because they provide "reproductive health services" by counseling potential clinic clients against abortion.■

Foster

Foster's troubled nomination a testament to power of "little old ladies"

Someone once described the pro-life movement as a bunch of little "old ladies with filing cabinets." The power of that image was displayed in the troubled nomination of abortionist Henry Foster to the post of U.S. Surgeon General.

Within hours of the announcement, Randy Engle, a self-described housewife from Pittsburgh, uncovered a 1978 transcript from her basement files which turned the nomination process upside-down.

White House spokesmen had previously said that Foster had only done one abortion in his 39 year practice as an obstetrician and gynecologist. Foster amended that to "fewer than a dozen" — and later to 39.

The transcript showed Foster bragging about "probably near 700" amniocentesis and therapeutic abortions.

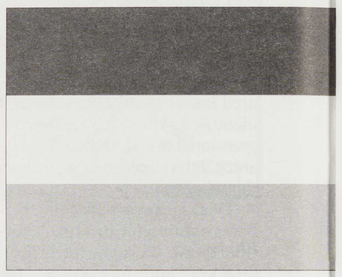
So, besides abortion itself, credibility became the issue as well.

Later, it was shown that Foster had "sterilized" mentally retarded women without their consent through the drastic procedure of hysterectomy — removal of the uterus. Foster, already on the defensive, countered that it was standard procedure at the time.

Critics noted that the surgeon general should be a leader, not a follower.

Days later, indications arose that Foster may have been privy to the infamous Tuskeegee Project where, under the auspices of the U.S. Public Health Service, black men with syphilis were left untreated for many years in order to see the effects of the disease on them.

The experiment was one of the great medical scandals in the United States and Foster was on the local 10-member medical society board in the county that conducted the experiment and that the board was briefed on the project in 1969 by the Public Health Service.■



Justice minister allows for euthanization of non-terminal patients

The Hague, NETHERLANDS — A new controversy over liberal Dutch mercy-killing laws threatened to blow up on February 16 after the justice minister said doctors could end the lives of patients who were not already dying.

"A doctor can have recourse to . . . euthanasia if the patient is in incurable and intolerable physical or mental suffering, even if that patient has not entered the terminal phase," Winnie Sorgdrager wrote in a letter to Parliament.

Sorgdrager of the D66 party was in effect only responding to a high court ruling last year. But her statement officially rolled back one of the strict requirements under which euthanasia is tolerated in the Netherlands.

It met a swift challenge from the opposition Christian Democrat party, which has a mainly conservative, church-going constituency, although a majority in Parliament broadly accepted her comments.

"This is opening the floodgates," said Christian Democrat member of Parliament Vincent van den Burg. "It is a breach in the dike, which we must close."

He said doctors must always work to save a patient's life if the patient is not at the terminal stage of an illness. To allow euthanasia or assisted suicide when a patient is not terminally ill is taking the tolerant policy dangerously far.■

Reno

Justice Department to look into violence against pro-lifers

Washington, D.C. — The FBI claims it is investigating death threats against abortion opponents under the law that has generally been used to protect access to abortion clinics.

"Whether they're pro-life or pro-choice, the department doesn't care," said Justice Department spokesman Joe Krovisky. "We're just following the statute."

He was referring to the 1994 Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act, which makes it a federal crime to block access to a reproductive health facility or use force or threats against people using the facility.

Operation Rescue, which organizes protests at abortion clinics nationwide, reported to police last month that death threats were left on an answering machine in its Washington office.

A February 14 letter from Deval L. Patrick, director of the Justice Department's civil rights division, to the Christian Defense Coalition confirmed that the Attorney General Janet Reno has asked the FBI to investigate the threats.

"We consider this a major victory," said Patrick Mahoney, director of the coalition. "There have been numerous threats, acts of violence, insults and intimidation against pro-life people over the last several years."

According to Krovisky, the FBI probe announced last week is not the first investigation of violence against abortion opponents. He said the department is looking into two other incidents but would not discuss the details.■

Chinese to step into euthanasia

Bejing, CHINA — Advisers in Shanghai's government have suggested euthanasia be allowed after a survey showed 90 percent of the residents of China's largest city approved of it, the *Beijing Evening News* said on February 22.

A group of members of the Shanghai Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, which is currently in session, suggested the municipal government allow euthanasia on a trial basis.

A survey by the Number Two Military Medical University's Shanghai Hospital says 93.6 percent of 313 people interviewed approve of euthanasia.

The survey showed 98.4 percent of medical personnel, 90 percent of people in legal circles and 90.1 percent of the general public were in favor of mercy killing, it said.

The advisory body laid down several conditions under which euthanasia could be exercised.

It said the patient had to want to die by euthanasia, three doctors must agree a patient could not be cured and relatives and the city government must approve.

Another condition was that there should be no inheritance or other legal disputes involved.■

Series of clinic fires in CA spurs investigation

San Francisco, CA — An attempted arson at Pregnancy Consultation Center on February 28 was the latest in a string of fires that have kept local and federal investigators busy in California. The arson attempt, which caused almost no damage, was set in the city of San Francisco. Mayor Frank Jordan had once bragged that the city was an "island of sanity" in the abortion debate because of the lack of pro-life activity there.

The February 21 attempted arson at Santa Cruz's Choice Medical Clinic was another one in the month-long series being investigated by local and federal officials. The Santa Cruz attempt also caused relatively minor damage as three road flares were tossed on the building's asphalt roof.

The San Luis Obisbo Planned Parenthood clinic was not so fortunate as charred furniture was heaped up outside the boarded up entrance after a February 15 arson.

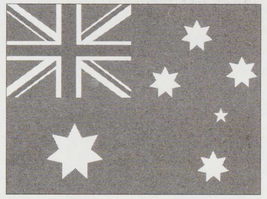
These three were but part of a series of arsons and arson attempts on California abortuaries. On February 12, burning tires were used to start a fire in Santa Barbara. The same method was used in a February 9 attempt which caused about $1,000 damage to Family Planning Associates Medical Group clinic in Ventura, about 20 miles southeast of Santa Barbara. On February 1, federal agents investigated an arson fire at a business complex housing a Planned Parenthood office in Modesto.

Terri Thorfinnson, spokeswoman for Planned Parenthood of Santa Barbara, Ventura and San Luis Obisbo counties, said the fires have prompted a security reexamination.

The organization has posted security guards at its four clinics, she said, but probably will install electronic surveillance cameras because it can't afford guards indefinitely.

"We feel these attacks are very organized and this is just the beginning," she said.

Federal authorities, members of the Abortion Violence Task Force, were on the scene in Santa Cruz trying to find a link between the fires.■



Australian province to consider euthanasia

Sydney, AUSTRALIA — On February 1, the chief minister of Australia's northern province announced a radical plan to allow terminally ill people to end their own lives and enable doctors to help, sparking a heated nationwide debate.

Marshall Perron, whose mother died 12 months ago, said he would introduce voluntary euthanasia legislation to the Northern Territory parliament late this month in a move that could create a national precedent.