

The Challenges of a Pro-life Professor and NFP Researcher – a presentation as the 2023 UFFL Rupert and Timothy Smith Award for Pro-Life Scholarship recipient

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PROLOGUE/INTRODUCTION: Although this presentation is about the challenges of being a pro-life professor at a Catholic university, my journey and beliefs were grounded before being a professor. This grounding in the values and reasons for being pro-life was essential for me.

I GREW UP IN AN INTACT CATHOLIC FAMILY, attended a Catholic grade school, and an all-boys Catholic high school. I do not believe that the pro-life issue was ever mentioned during that time and at those Catholic educational programs. I attended Marquette University but was not involved with any pro-life group at the university as they did not exist. I do remember some dissent to Catholic teaching on the Eucharist and was introduced to Betty Friedan and the plight of women in my philosophy course. The biggest challenges in those undergrad days were the civil rights and Vietnam war protests on campus and in the city. I was in the first draft since World War II and learned I drew a very low draft number, which meant

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I would be drafted as soon as I graduated. I graduated with a Baccalaureate of Science degree in Biology in May of 1970.

I decided that I needed to take my future in my own hands and not end up being placed into the infantry and then sent to Vietnam. I visited the Marine and Army recruiters and thought about entering their officers' training programs, but I found out about an Army Hospital Reserve Unit in Milwaukee—the 452nd Hospital Unit—and applied for and entered the Army reserves. I was to be trained as an operating room technician, which involved a nine-month training program at Fort Sam Houston and Brooks Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. I attended monthly reserve training and applied for employment as a laboratory technician. In the meantime, I heard about the Army Student Nurse Corps training program. The Army would pay for your final two years of a baccalaureate nurse program, you would be considered on active duty, receive pay as a private first class, and be sworn in as a first lieutenant at graduation. I went back to Marquette University, contacted the Dean of the College of Nursing, and they designed a two-year program for me. I applied to the Army Nurse program and was accepted and transferred to active duty in the Army as a student in the Marquette University Baccalaureate Nursing program.

During my years post-graduation and the two years that I was in the nursing program, I became active in the youth pro-life movement. I joined a group called Save Our Unwanted Lives, or SOUL for short. When Roe v. Wade was decided and announced in 1973, our group held a rally and protest on the City of Milwaukee's Court House Plaza—on a cold wintry day in February. I remember that we were active in presenting the pro-life slide show (produced by Dr. Jack and Barbara Wilke) at local high schools and youth groups and continued some protests. I also remember traveling to a national pro-life conference and having lunch with an ob/gyn resident named Tom Hilgers, who eventually developed the Creighton Model of natural family planning (NFP) teacher training program in Omaha, Nebraska. I also became a volunteer counselor for Birth Right at Saint Anthony's Hospital in Milwaukee and worked as a volunteer nurse in the Guadalupe Free Health Clinic.

After graduating with a Baccalaureate in Nursing Science in August of 1973 at Marquette University, I was discharged from the regular Army and

sworn in as a first lieutenant on active duty with the Army Nurse Corps. I had eight weeks of medical/nursing officer's basic training at Brooks Army Medical Center in Fort Sam Houston, Texas and after completion was assigned as an Intensive Care Nurse at William Beaumont Army Medical Center in El Paso, Texas. I served two years in a 14-bed Intensive Care Unit; after two years I was promoted to captain and became a head nurse of a new infectious disease unit. While on active duty as an Army Nurse, I continued to occasionally present the Wilke pro-life slide show on off-duty hours. The issue of abortion was not mentioned while I was on duty as a nurse in an Army hospital, since military hospitals were not permitted to have abortions. However, I did encounter end-of-life issues, especially in the intensive care units where discussions of "do not resuscitate," hastening death, and practicing on dying patients—usually old veterans—occurred. I frequently attended Mass at the hospital chapel and at the chapel on the nearby Fort Bliss Army Base. I also became friends with the Hospital Army Chaplain and often assisted him at Mass as a lector and server.

After my required active duty in the Army Nurse Corps, I knew that I wanted to further my education and study cardiovascular health problems. While at the William Beaumont Army Medical Center, a friend and colleague of mine, Captain Nancy Adams, was a clinical nurse specialist who obtained her masters at the Catholic University of America School of Nursing. She influenced my interest in advancing my nursing education and applying to the Cardiovascular specialization master's program at Catholic University. Captain Nancy Adams became the general of the Army Nurse Corps and received a second star as Major General and Surgeon General of Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii.

There were two programs in the United States at that time that had graduate specialization in cardiovascular nursing: The Catholic University and the University of Alabama. I chose Catholic University and began my studies in the Spring semester of 1977. At Catholic University I went to Mass every day at the Caldwell Hall chapel and would hear sermons by Frs. Avery Dulles and Charles Curran, both of whom would later have an impact on my life. Probably the peak of my experience at Catholic University was when I met Pope John Paul II at a special scholar's reception and talk. Little did I

know then how much impact his writings would have on my life and scholarship.

Life as a New Tenure Line Professor

I left Catholic University in the summer of 1980 after completing my masters in cardiovascular nursing and completed my data collection for my doctoral dissertation. I needed to start a job and make money as my GI Bill money was over and I had spent all the savings from my Army days. I interviewed for a position at Catholic University, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Marquette University. I chose Marquette University because it was in Milwaukee near my family (brothers and sisters) and parents, because it was a Catholic institution, and because I was an alumnus. I started my position as an Assistant Professor in the College of Nursing in August of 1980. At that time, I was writing my chapters for my dissertation, which I completed in the Fall semester and defended my dissertation in April of 1981.

As a new assistant professor, I was assigned 12 undergraduate advisees, and three courses; all three were graduate courses in research, adult health, and advanced nursing practice. At that time, I was conducting research in biofeedback systems, stress management, and hypertension. I did receive some grant money for my research from the American Heart Association. In the Spring of 1981, I defended my dissertation at Catholic University and graduated with a PhD in nursing science.

In the Fall of 1981, I also had a position in the Marquette University counseling center; I helped students cope with stress and behavioral problems related to their academics. The director of the program mentioned that his wife was the Director of Nursing at Saint Anthony's hospital in Milwaukee, and that they wanted to start a small health clinic for the homeless that was connected to the Saint Benedict's Parish free meal program. I agreed and became a part-time staff nurse on two evenings per week and helped to start and run the small clinic for the homeless population who attended the free meal program. The major health problems we dealt with included skin and foot care, finding other healthcare resources, but mostly dealing with mental health and drug and alcohol abuse or both. However, I did notice that most had family members in or near Milwaukee, which made me wonder about

the breakdown of the family as a compounding factor to homelessness. I eventually conducted health assessment surveys among the homeless who lived on the streets with a dental professor at Marquette University.

I was also involved with developing and setting up nurse-managed clinics at two church-based settings. One at the Wauwatosa United Methodist Church and the other at Saint Michael's, a poor inner-city parish run by the Franciscans. I spent Sunday mornings at the Methodist church wellness clinic and became a parish nurse at Saint Michael's working with the Hmong and Laotian, Hispanic, and African- American communities. I taught a graduate clinical course and undergraduate community health course, so we also set up nurse clinics at three housing projects in Milwaukee and in the old Notre Dame sister's convent connected to Saint Michael's Parish.

Our nursing school was connected to Saint Joseph Hospital, the largest baby delivery hospital in Wisconsin at that time. One of the most dedicated and well-known obstetricians at that hospital was Doctor John Brennan. He was known as "the pro-life baby doctor." He also led and arranged monthly pro-life breakfasts at the hospital with prominent lawyers, physicians, and professors from the Milwaukee area, which I regularly attended. One day Dr. Brennan came up to me and said he would like to start a natural family planning (NFP) training program at our College of Nursing. I did not know it at the time but that encounter drastically changed my life, both personally and academically. I told Dr. Brennan I would see what I could do but made no promise.

I did not know much about NFP, but started to explore what training programs were available. Dr. Brennan was vice president of what is called the Billings Ovulation Method International. I thought that we could train some of our maternal child faculty with that program, but that program was not very well developed and not very structured. One day while checking on patients that my graduate students were taking care of, I noticed one of the graduate students in a small conference room at Saint Michael's Hospital with a NFP chart. I asked her what she was doing and said that I was interested in starting an NFP teacher training program at Marquette. She told me that she was a teacher with the Creighton Model system of NFP that was started and developed by Dr. Thomas Hilgers. I investigated the program and invited one of the staff from Creighton to come to Marquette and talk with

Dean Sr. Rosalie and a few maternal child faculty. We decided that since it was also an established program at a Catholic Jesuit university and had a developed NFP teacher training program, that we would pursue that direction.

I wrote a grant proposal for money to train two Marquette College of Nursing maternal child faculty to go through the Creighton model program. The Creighton model NFP program required two seven-day classroom training courses, and two long practicum courses. I received that grant money and thought that I was done with that project. In the Summer of 1984, Sr. Rosalie called me on the phone (you never like getting calls from the dean in the Summer!) and said that one of the maternal child faculty members quit Marquette and that she would like me to go instead. I did not want to go to the training program, since it was not in my area of nursing, the topics were not in the courses I taught, and NFP was not related to my research trajectory. Furthermore, it would take a lot of time and effort, but praying about her request and losing a lot of sleep over my decision, I finally agreed.

I went through the extensive Creighton Model (CrM) training program and started teaching the CrM of NFP to couples in January of 1985 at Saint Joseph Hospital and at our College of Nursing. Setting up a program was not easy. This was just the beginning of the endeavor to start a NFP CrM teacher training program at Marquette University. To develop such a program, you need certified CrM teachers (who provide NFP services) and certified CrM educators (who teach the CrM teacher how to provide NFP services). I wrote and obtained more grant money to send a couple of professional nurses through the CrM practitioner program, supervisor program, and the educator program. Two of the professional nurses who went through the program were taught the CrM of NFP for their own use as a couple by me. In addition, one of the Jesuit professors at Marquette University went through the CrM clergy program as did a local physician (ob/gyn). It took years, over a decade, to put together the necessary components of a CrM NFP teacher training program.

In the meantime, I conducted research on NFP, i.e., marital dynamics, effectiveness studies, and on indicators of fertility. I also became involved with the American Academy of Natural Family Planning. We held their annual conference in Milwaukee, I was on the AANFP board, and eventually became president of the organization. At the AANFP meeting in Charles

Town, West Virginia, in which I was the president, I was honored to present Drs. John and Evelyn Billings an award for their achievements in developing and spreading the ovulation method of NFP worldwide.

I also became very active in what is called the nursing diagnosis movement, which involves diagnosing and treating human responses to disease and treatments. I developed a validation model for nursing diagnosis, researched and published on the responses of spiritual distress and wellbeing, became the chair of the Wisconsin Nursing Diagnosis Association, and developed statewide conferences. My article on validation models for nursing diagnosis is my number one cited article and still today it is often cited. In 2012, I was inducted as a pioneer fellow in the international nursing diagnosis association known as NANDA International. I went to the conference in Houston to receive the fellowship and was pleasantly surprised that I was treated as a “rock star” by many of the participants, in particular nurses from Brazil and Portugal.

Mid-Phase Career – Under New Dean

While the 1980s involved many of my best experiences as a professor of nursing, the 1990s brought my greatest challenges. Life was pretty good for me during the 1980s and primarily with our Catholic Dean Sr. Rosalie Klein and the strong Catholic leaders of Marquette University. However, all of that changed when Sr. Rosalie Klein retired, we hired a new Dean for the College and a new president of the University. I was fortunate that I was tenured in 1988 as an associate professor.

The new dean, a divorced former nun, was hostile to my work in NFP and in our nursing wellness clinics. She indoctrinated the faculty in the new way of thinking; even back then, diversity, equity, and inclusion were essentially her calling cards. She brought along with her a group of new faculty personnel who were her disciples. She took me out of my graduate courses, which I loved and had developed, and she placed me into courses where I did not have expertise. The last time I had practiced as a professional nurse in a hospital setting was in my Army days in the early and mid-1970s. I was placed in an oncology and infectious disease unit (that included AIDS patients) with junior-level undergraduate nursing students. I was unprepared for and frightened by the situation. I also taught pathophysiology, a very

intense and heavy course, and medical surgical nursing. It took me a lot of time to prepare and become competent in teaching those courses and being safe in the oncology unit with many very sick and complicated patients. During the new dean's tenure, I was provided very little salary increase and one year no increase at all. However, I continued my research in fertility monitoring and NFP, and I continued to provide NFP services at Marquette University and Saint Joseph's Hospital. This dean lasted only about four years and was asked to step down. But she was replaced by another former nun and very vocal dissenter to the Catholic Church's teaching on contraception and the use of NFP.

One of the positive highlights of the 1990s was when I was informed about this new pro-life organization (University Faculty for Life) by one of the Jesuits at Marquette, and I attended the second national conference at Georgetown University in 1992. The conference was a joy to be at and awesome to hear from wonderful pro-life scholars like Dr. Jerome Lejeune. The large conference room was packed. Another joy of the event was that on the plane flight with me was a professor of civil engineering at Marquette (Al Zanoni). He sat next to me on the plane, and we discussed starting a chapter of University Faculty for Life (UFFL) at Marquette University. Soon after that meeting I was invited to be on the UFFL board with Fr. Tom King, SJ, Fr. Robert Spitzer, SJ, and other distinguished professors and to a meeting in Fr. King's office at Georgetown University. I was soon appointed by the board of UFFL as vice-president for membership.

Back at Marquette University I wrote to the provost at that time about starting a chapter of UFFL at Marquette University. He essentially said that professors have a right to gather to discuss and debate pro-life issues. Professor Zanoni and I contacted other pro-life professors whom we knew and developed the Marquette Chapter of UFFL. I became president of that organization. Over the years we hosted and co-hosted many lectures with esteemed professors such as Cardinal Avery Dulles, SJ, Rev. Robert Spitzer, SJ, Rev. Joseph Koterski, SJ, and Kevin Fitzpatrick, SJ, and Professors Theresa Collett, J.D., Helen Alvare, J.D. (both professors of Law) and others. We held smaller lunchtime presentations on pro-life issues at least once a semester. We also collaborated with Marquette Students for Life, and the Milwaukee, Green Bay, La Crosse, and Chicago guilds of the Catholic

Medical Association on conferences. As a chapter of UFFL, we were honored to host three national University Faculty for Life conferences. At our last UFFL conference at Marquette, the president of Marquette, Dr. Michael Lovell, hosted a wine and cheese reception in the presidential suite for our attendees.

I continued teaching and researching the CrM model of NFP—at Saint Joseph’s Hospital and at the College of Nursing. I had help from two new CrM professional nurse teachers (Mary Schneider and Susana Crespo). I finally submitted the required four courses for a CrM NFP teacher training program at Marquette. However, the proposed courses never made it through the College of Nursing curriculum review committee. I also found out that we did not meet the ethical requirements for the CrM courses in that I was not able to ask students at Marquette as to whether they were using contraceptives. We also needed the flexibility to research and develop our own NFP courses. After spending all that money, time, research, and education with the CrM, I decided that we needed to develop our own system of natural family planning.

In the meantime, I was invited to be on the Advisory Board of for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops NFP Department which was at that time part of the Pro-Life Secretariate. I attended many meetings in Washington, D.C., and other places in the United States as we developed the USCCB standards for Diocesan NFP programs and teacher training programs. I was involved with visiting various dioceses in the United States to help them assess and develop their diocesan NFP programs. I also was asked to write what is called Current Medical Research in Natural Family Planning (i.e., NFP and related research reviews) for the USCCB and did so for twenty years. I am still a frequent consultant and presenter for the USCCB department of NFP.

In 1997 I was suddenly invited to a meeting with our advancement officer and a lawyer for a charitable foundation. When we sat down at the meeting and after informal introductions, the lawyer said that the foundation wanted to fund a chair in Natural Family Planning at the College of Nursing. The Advancement officer stated that a lot of people ask about funding a chair but don’t realize how much it costs. She said that at Marquette that the cost for a faculty chair begins at 3.5 million dollars. The lawyer did not blink and

said his foundation wanted to fund a chair. So, what happened next? Instead of jumping at the offer, the university officials waited for several months and then came back with a proposal for a chair in Catholic bioethics. The donors were not interested in that proposal and were afraid the money would just be used for a liberal-focused ethics program. They, however, offered \$400,000 dollars to start a NFP Institute at the College of Nursing. The purposes of this new institute were to provide NFP teacher training for health professionals, conduct NFP research, and to offer innovative NFP services.

With this money we developed a new system of NFP called the Marquette Model (MM), which combined new hormonal monitoring technology with older indicators of fertility, i.e., changes in cervical mucus, and basal body temperature. With this new system of NFP, there was a need to develop a MM NFP teacher training program for health professionals, provide MM NFP services, and test the effectiveness of the new system of NFP. We developed three courses, an NFP theory course, a teacher training practice course, and a medical application course. The theory and practice courses were submitted as formal credit courses, and they were accepted by the college of nursing curriculum committee and the university committee for approval. We also sought and received USCCB approval for our system and courses. We eventually placed the courses online so that health professionals from around the world could have access.

We (my staff and I) conducted effectiveness studies on the new system of NFP, that included a cohort effectiveness study, a comparison study of our system of NFP to another system of NFP, a randomized comparison study, and studies of effectiveness for the postpartum breastfeeding transition to fertility, and the perimenopause transition to menopause. Furthermore, we conducted and published a study of the effectiveness of the MM in helping couples achieve pregnancy. We also carried out studies on the satisfaction and ease of use of the MM method, the amount of abstinence required, and spiritual wellbeing in the use of NFP. We developed an online system of the MM of NFP and received a large federal grant to study that online system of providing NFP services. We were also involved with developing and hosting an annual conference on NFP. Four of them with the Department of NFP of the USCCB. I co-edited the proceedings of those conferences with Dr.

Theresa Notare, the department chair of NFP at the USCCB. The books were published through the Marquette University Press.

I became a full professor in 2010, and at that time the dean realized that my pay was way below what a full professor receives and gave me a good boost in salary. Note that 75% of my salary was paid by the foundation and federal grant money, and that I was teaching three online courses and conducting research and directing the Institute. I still had to teach a large graduate research course, advise a group of undergraduate students, and serve on college and university committees. One incident of note is that at one of our NFP conferences, a graduate student in our midwifery program approached me and said that she did not want to prescribe contraception as it was against her beliefs, although she was not a Catholic. I introduced her to some ob/gyns who were faculty in a resident program for ob/gyns, and they said they had residents go through their program without having to prescribe contraception. I said I would help her and thought that we would have a further meeting and discuss her course of action. That Monday the dean came to my office, furious that this student wrote a letter to the president of the university indicating that she had hired a lawyer and would be fighting for her rights not to prescribe contraception. Well, the dean and the president and the Nurse-Midwifery faculty thought that I helped her instigate this approach. That incident put me in a bad place not only with the dean, but also with the president and the Nurse-Midwifery faculty. Other Nurse-Midwifery students who wished to be midwives and not prescribe contraception were treated differently and never went through that program. The dean also brought in a moral theologian from the Department of Theology, who was also a priest of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, who explained as what Jesus would do in this situation; his conclusion was that it would be unethical for the students to interfere with the patient and provider wishes.

The dean was promoted to provost, and then a new chapter in my life began. Although I was bought out for directing the institute and was teaching four courses, conducting research, and serving on committees, I was asked by (or rather told by) an interim dean that I was now the new Director of Research for the College, which was and still is a near full-time position. I had a staff of graduate students and a biostatistician, and I was charged with growing the research activity of the faculty and college. I also sat on the

university research committee and eventually became the chair of research at the university and worked closely with the vice president for research.

My Final Academic Phase

One committee that was especially important to be on was the tenure line faculty recruitment committee. As a full professor, I was the chair of the committee. I made sure that applicants who had red flags (like having worked for Planned Parenthood) were not hired. I also was very keen in determining if they can be supportive of the Catholic Jesuit mission of the University. In addition, I was on the recruitment committee for a new dean, and I was pleased when we hired a very academically accomplished and Catholic and pro-life dean. She became a good friend and a pleasure to work with.

One telling incident in what direction the college was going was when she appointed me chair of a committee to review and revise our College Mission Statement. The statement we developed mirrored the university mission statement as a Catholic Jesuit institution. However, when we brought the statement to the faculty, the first challenge was to take out the term Catholic, as it was too offensive, based on some student who challenged a faculty person about her view on some moral issue. This person started crying, which really put a pall on the discussion. Then another faculty person got up and objected to the word Jesuit. at that point the dean and I tabled the discussion for another meeting. The mission statement was discussed and voted on about a month later, but it was only saved when an AfricanAmerican faculty person who stated that she is not Catholic but came to this university and job because of its Catholic Jesuit base.

In 2014, I found out that I had cancer and underwent radical surgical removal, and 38 days of radiation treatment. I decided at that point to retire as a tenured 65-year-old professor but to remain as the Director of the Institute for NFP, essentially a full-time position. I also continued my research and mentored two more Ph.D. students, one who continues to collaborate with me on research studies and publications. Another became the new director of the institute on July 1, 2021, after I stepped down from that position. However, I still work with the institute as a researcher, and faculty for the medical application course.

About a year ago, I found a folder that somebody left in my college mailbox. I think it was left by the former budget manager for the college. The folder contained communications between the dean of the College of Nursing and the president of the university concerning their reactions to the offer for a 3.5-million-dollar gift for a chair in Natural Family Planning. I knew most of the history and their counter-proposal, but what I did not know is what they thought of me. They stated that if we had a chair in NFP, it would be Richard who wagged the dog's tail. They also said that it was not academic and essentially would be an embarrassment to Marquette and the College of Nursing.

Over my academic career, I generated over 3.5 million dollars in federal and foundation funds. I have over 200 publications and have been on national boards. The NFP system that I developed is the most evidenced-based and research-based system of NFP in the world. The MM has been used by thousands of couples throughout the world. We have educated numerous health professionals to be MM NFP providers in the United States, Canada, and at least five other countries. I was a research mentor for physician residents from the Mayo Clinic, the University of Calgary, the University of British Columbia, and Aurora Health. According to ResearchGate and the Marquette Library system, I have had over 220,000 downloads of my articles by researchers and academics throughout the world. I have a higher academic score than 95% of the scholars on ResearchGate, and 98% of the nurse scholars on that site. I am a Fellow in the American Academy of Nursing, the highest-level academic nursing organization. This past November I received the Edge Runner award from the American Academy of Nursing, a very prestigious award in academic nursing for my work with developing the MM of NFP.

As a result of my work in NFP and fertility, I have been invited by the US Department of Health and Human Services of the Office of Population Affairs to review Title X NFP teacher training programs, which included Planned Parenthood clinics. I also received a large Office of Population Affairs federal research grant. I was invited to be one of the scientists at the NIH-sponsored conference on the Menstrual Cycle as a Vital Sign for women's health. I was an invited research scientist and presenter as part of a

two-day Office of Population Affairs Title X meeting on NFP in Washington DC.

Lessons Learned

One of my biggest lessons in helping me to meet the challenges as a pro-life and pro-NFP professor at a Catholic Jesuit university, was to have a foundation in my faith through prayer and sacramental life. When on the campus of Marquette, I tried to drop everything every day at work, and attend the 12:05 Mass at Gesu Church on campus or at the Joan of Arc Chapel. I had a spiritual advisor to help discern life and receive the sacraments. I also found it helpful to constantly discern how I think God is directing me in life. Obviously, my life took various turns that opened opportunities to help build a culture of life.²

One of my most important ways to meet the challenges of university life as an outwardly pro-life professor and NFP scientist was through a strong family life. As a single person, family life was very important for me for my mental and spiritual health. I moved back to the Milwaukee area where my parents and two brothers and two sisters lived with their families. My older sister and her husband live only five blocks from me. Our extended family have vacationed together every year at Rhinelander, Wisconsin, and Holiday Acres resort for over 35 years. We usually have about 40 members of my family, which includes my nieces and nephews and brothers and sisters. We also celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas together as a family. It is especially important when my nieces and nephews celebrate baptisms, communions, graduations, weddings, and funerals of my parents and relatives.

² On a side note, in this regard, about 15 years ago Marquette University hosted faculty from the Midwest Jesuit universities for a spiritual weekend with workshops. I and another nursing faculty were given the task of meeting with a group of professors who read a paper on being called to your role as a university professor and how to discern your calling and whether your calling is accurately reflected in the fruits you bear. As we went around the group to ask them how they were called or what they felt was their main purpose in their life as a professor, no one saw the connection and were more concerned that the Jesuit university was pushing religion on them.

My friends, both professional and non-professionals, are also a very important way for me to continue my path as a pro-life and pro-NFP professor. One of my best friends from grade school, Dan Zeidler, is a longtime pro-life advocate—we often get together for breakfast and other events. For many years he arranged a monthly pro-life Mass for Milwaukee area proliferators that was celebrated by my friend Fr. Bill Kurz, SJ, a long-time professor in the Marquette University Theology Department. After the Mass we often would gather for pizza and conversation. For many years, and still today, I have gathered on the weekend with my friends Fr. Bill Kurz, professor emeritus Al Zanoni and his wife Dottie, Marquette Librarian Patrick Doyle, PhD, and Milwaukee Assistant District Attorney Thomas Potter. We would go to dinner, have conversations on news of the day—often on pro-life issues, and then a movie at my house. These social encounters helped me to ground myself in life and helped me to keep mentally and spiritually integrated.

Belonging to UFFL and other like-minded groups, such as the Catholic Medical Association, is critical for maintaining that grounding and coping as a pro-life professor. Every year, the UFFL conference is an oasis in academia in which a pro-life professor can be open about his or her views and share them with others. These groups are also a source of growth and learning in pro-life issues and for academic credibility. Being a member of other organizations that have the same moral values and beliefs in life, like the Catholic Medical Association, also kept me grounded in my faith and academic life.³

Being the best professor I can be is an important goal for me. This goal is important to maintain professional credibility, my belief in myself being worthy as a professor, and being able to influence others. Being a credible full professor and being pro-life and pro-NFP sometimes meant going beyond what others do to become a credible academic. It also meant being in the top of my field in areas other than pro-life and NFP, which would be acceptable to those who judge your academic performance. For example, I have several publications in the official journal of the Catholic Medical

³ Attending the Catholic Medical Association annual educational meetings with my physician colleagues, Jim Linn, Ob/Gyn, Kathleen Raviele, Ob/Gyn, and Thomas Bouchard, family medicine, were professional highlights in my life.

Association, *The Linacre Quarterly*. It is a peer-reviewed academic journal. However, I know from being in tenure review committee meetings that it was not regarded as a credible journal. In fact, having articles published in the journal would probably be a negative for tenure. Therefore, I made sure that I also published in top-level journals such as *Fertility and Sterility*, *Contraception*, and *Women's Health*. This also means taking advantage of opportunities that are outside one's comfort zone and areas of expertise.

I also think getting out of your comfort zone by reaching out to prochoice professors and befriending them as colleagues is important. Our Midwifery faculty are very pro-choice and feminist. I, however, conducted a couple of research studies with them, and they attended and presented at our NFP conference. They remain as friends and colleagues.

Being a mentor and role model to students, especially pro-life students, is very important. These students need to be validated by their professors and teachers. Some of the leaders of Marquette Students for Life eventually became colleagues and leaders in pro-life organizations. Right now, I have the privilege of working with a junior-level nursing student named Sofie. She is conducting research with me on the topic of the effects of lifestyle on the management of polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS). We are especially interested the effects of lifestyle on the parameters of the menstrual cycle. The menstrual cycle is a vital sign for women's health and as such it is a prime outcome for assessing whether treatments for PCOS are helpful or not. Sofie is a very mature young Catholic woman who is a joy to be around. Mentoring young students helps keep older professors like me "on their toes and up to date" so to speak and young at heart.

A final way to meet the challenges of being a pro-life professor at a Catholic Jesuit university or any university is to have heroes and role models. Two of the heroes in my life are Pope Saint John Paul II and Professor Fr. Joseph Koterski, S.J., Ph.D. I had the opportunity of meeting Pope Saint John Paul II in person at a scholars' meeting at Catholic University in Washington DC. But he has influenced me most of all through his writing on the theology of the body, his apostolic letter to families, and his encyclical *Evangelium vitae*. These documents have influenced my own research and writings as attested by my presentations and papers for UFFL. Notably in *Evangelium vitae* (i.e., *On The Gospel of Life*) he compares contraception and abortion

as the fruits of the same tree, and advocated NFP clinics as the first way of building a culture of life.⁴ And in his apostolic letter *Familiaris consortia*, he called on researchers and scholars to explore the differences in the use of contraception and natural methods of family planning.⁵ When Pope Saint John Paul II died in 2005, it was a very personal loss to me and one I will never forget.

Finally, and not least, is the friendship and collegueship I had with Fr. Joseph Koterski, a professor of philosophy at Fordham University and longtime UFFL member. His kindness, gentleness, and willingness to serve others as a professor and Jesuit priest inspired me. His unexpected death brought a void not only in UFFL but for me personally. I often emailed Fr. Joe and delighted in his responses. I saved some of these short emails and quips from Fr. Koterski and close my paper and presentation with the wisdom of Fr. Koterski. He often called me Sir Richard.

Kindly Sir Richard, Good Sir Richard, Merciful Sir Richard, I badly need to ask your forgiveness. I am mortified.

Free us, o Lord, from domination by auto correct. Your people is oppressed and calls out to Thee!

Ah, if it were only as easy to update our lives as to update our bios.

Thank you, Richard.

Glad to see that Harvard University is encouraging prayer. More than we can say for some other institutions, but I will not name names!

⁴ Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae* (The Gospel of Life) in *Origins* 24/42 (6 April 1995), #13.

⁵ Pope John Paul II, *The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World* (*Familiaris Consortio*) (Boston MA: The Daughters of St. Paul, 1981), #32.

Dear Sir Richard and Sir Kevin,

Congratulations. It was clearly your own cheering, and hoisting of a brew that led to a victory last evening!

Bravo!

Fr. Joe:

Happy feast day of Saint Joseph the Worker. Now, get to work!

I hope all is well with you and Fordham.

Richard

Thank you for the encouragement!

As Avery Dulles used to say, "I think some people violate the Third Commandment. They take Saturday off!" My best to the gang!

Please hoist one fur mich.

Fr. Joe:

Happy feast of St. Joseph the Worker!

And workers unite – but don't forget about the May Pole!

And the Victory Parade!

And the May (Mai) Bach Beer!

Richard,

May St Joseph the patron saint of workers pray to God for the
hardworking Richard!

Fr. Joe

