

Elections Volunteers Needed

This fall, a number of pro-life candidates stand a strong chance of election to the RI General Assembly. In a small number of key races, influential pro-abortion incumbents could be unseated. To bring about these elections results, RIRTL needs volunteers both before and during the Sept. 9 statewide primaries and the Nov. 4 general elections. We're looking for people to make reminder phone calls to pro-life voters and to hand out literature throughout their districts before election day and at their polling places on election day. Please call 521-1860 for more information.

Stay Current on Important Elections Information

With elections coming up fast, RIRTL is increasing the frequency of our educational elections emails. Receive important updates on the state and federal candidates and races, as well as pro-life news, with our email alerts, now going out every week. Sign up through our website, www.rirtl.org. Click Legislation, then Legislative Action, then Legislative Alerts, and enter your email address in the box. You can also sign up for the email alerts by calling Alison Corcoran at 521-1860.

RIRTL Political Action Fund Needs Your Help

The coming election affords a real possibility for the RIRTL State Political Action Committee (PAC) to significantly influence the makeup of the RI General Assembly in a pro-life direction. Through our Federal PAC, moreover, we can and must inform the electorate of the high stakes involved for the pro-life movement in the upcoming presidential election. We need your help! Please send your check(s) made out to "RI Right to Life State PAC" and / or "RI Right to Life Federal PAC" today. Our address is P.O. Box 28285, Providence, RI 02908. Please note that donations to our Political Action Committees are not tax-deductible and that each individual may contribute no more than \$1,000 annually to our State PAC and \$5,000 annually to our Federal PAC.

Summer 2008



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Providence, RI 02908

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Right to Life News

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Rhode Island Right to Life Welcomes New Executive Director

Becky Miller, Education Coordinator

Barth E. Bracy enthusiastically took on the position of Rhode Island Right to Life Executive Director at the end of June. He has quickly picked up all the facets of the job, with a special focus on local chapters. Bracy has already started working to emphasize two crucial functions of chapters: education and political action. "I believe that the development of chapters will be the best way to educate the good citizens of Rhode Island and advance our legislative goals at the State House and, eventually, get some pro-life candidates elected to the U.S. Congress," he said.

Bracy has worked as a missionary since 1993. His experiences include much work in the area of grassroots chapter development in the Philippines and other Asian countries, as well as Colombia and the U.S. "Though the purpose of the chapters was different, the dynamics of chapter organization and development are similar," he said.

He sees a clear sense of purpose in his recent move home to America from the Philippines. "We knew we were being called to come back to the States and knew that God had a plan for us," he



Barth E. Bracy recently became Executive Director of RIRTL.

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RIRTL Celebrates Rita Parquette's Achievements

Becky Miller, Education Coordinator

After seven years of service as the Executive Director of Rhode Island Right to Life, Rita Parquette is retiring. Though she's moving out of her full time role, she plans to continue her involvement in RIRTL as well as the greater pro-life movement. "This is a cause you don't really retire from," she said.

Parquette accepted the Executive Director position in the fall of 2001. She was directing Woman to Woman, a crisis pregnancy center in Middletown, RI, when friends encouraged her to apply for the Right to Life opening. "It was one of those 'jumping from the frying pan into the fire' decisions, but I am very grateful and honored to have had the opportunity to work in the front lines of the movement for the unborn," she said. "It has been the most creative and fulfilling position I have ever had next to that of raising my children."



Rita Parquette recently retired from the Executive Director position.

With a background in obstetrical nursing, Parquette brought a tender care and concern for mothers and babies to her pro-life work. "I've always loved working with women in labor," she said. "The miracle of birth never grows old. As a labor and delivery nurse, I was approached several times during the years after Roe v. Wade to assist our obstetricians with abortions in the operating room, as the OR nurses were refusing to do so. I always refused."

When her children were born, Parquette retired from nursing but still taught childbirth classes. She got involved in the pro-life movement as

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Barth Bracy

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said. "As I have moved into this position, God's Providence has become clear. I feel honored and fulfilled to serve in this capacity."

Bracy holds a Sacrae Theologiae Baccalaureus (S.T.B.), equivalent to the American M.Div., and a Professional Diploma in Pastoral Counseling & Family Ministries from Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines. He also has a Baccalaureatus in Philosophia (Ph. B.) from the University of Santo Tomas and has almost completed a Licentiate (Ph.L) in Philosophy, a degree roughly equivalent to the American M.A. His undergraduate education is in Math and Physics from Union College and the State University of New York. He has been a deacon in his church since 2003.

He and his family have settled in Providence, not far from Right to Life headquarters. He has been married to his wife, Abbie, since Feb. 2, 2002, and they have three young boys—Nathanael (5), Andre (3), and John Paul (8 months).

Looking ahead, Bracy is optimistic about the pro-life cause in Rhode Island. "I was very inspired when I recently learned that the state motto is 'Hope,'" he said. "This is the theme I will adopt during my tenure at RIRTL. It would be impossible for me to exaggerate how easy a transition this has been due to the diligence of Rita Parquette. It is clear to me, sitting in the chair she has so recently occupied, that she has done a remarkable job and has left a robust and healthy organization with which to move forward." 🙏

Board Members

- Diane Manning, Chairperson
- Pat Lafreniere, Secretary
- Michael Motta, Treasurer
- Robert Sullivan
- Joseph Clossick
- Catherine Graziano
- Jack Parquette
- Diane Caracciolo
- Pilar Tasca
- Lisa Torrado
- Rev. James Turnipseed
- Rita Parquette
- Barth E. Bracy, Executive Director

Advisors

- Robert Duffy, Esq.
- Eduardo Birbuet
- Kevin McDevitt
- Chad Lamendola, MD

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RIRTL Chapter Forms in Smithfield



Some of the members of the Northern RI Chapter meet with the outgoing and incoming RIRTL Executive Directors. Front row L-R: Ron and Shirley Fontenault, Cindi Carroll, and Ellie Sawyer. Back row L-R: Heidi Wallace, Rita Parquette, and Barth Bracy.

At their second meeting, on July 7, the Northern Rhode Island RIRTL Chapter elected officers: Ellie Sawyer, President; Cindi Carroll, Secretary; and Heidi Wallace, Treasurer.

If you'd like to be part of a developing chapter, contact Barth Bracy at the Rhode Island Right to Life office, (401) 521-1860, or by email at bebracy@rirtl.org.

Services Report

Peg Lavalley, Services Coordinator

Between April and June 2008, Right to Life Services distributed 6 bassinets, 8 containers of formula, 25 newborn packages, 124 toddler clothing packages, 51 toiletries items, 40 packages of baby wipes, and 91 packages of diapers. 🙏

Rita Parquette

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a volunteer in Maine, where she helped establish a crisis pregnancy center. She continued her pro-life work when the family relocated to Rhode Island, first at Woman to Woman, then at RIRTL.

In 2001, Parquette came in to an organization that had just experienced a significant drop in donations, as did many non-profits in those post-9/11 months. Under Parquette's leadership, RIRTL undertook a major Capital Campaign to accomplish the Board's strategic plan. "My main goals at RIRTL were financial security for the organization, moving the organization in a more professional direction, energizing the pro-life grassroots, and vamping up our education efforts, especially to the youth in our state," she said. She made major strides in all those areas.

"The money we raised through the Capital Campaign enabled us to retire our mortgage, put up a comprehensive website, and hire an Education Coordinator, while continuing our state and national lobbying and public policy strategies," she said. "We also attracted the expertise of more professionals in the movement, such as attorneys, doctors, and businessmen. This has continued to add a much-needed dimension to the credentials and activities of RIRTL."

Grassroots mobilization through chapter development has been Parquette's focus for the past year. "I am very encouraged to see the establishment of our first chapter," she said. "Chapters will help us identify and organize the pro-life grassroots. This will give us an opportunity to educate more people in the local communities and identify volunteers who, as individual citizens, will help elect pro-life candidates. The stalemate we experience in the legislature is due to the fact that we do not have the people in leadership who will allow pro-life legislation to be passed out of committee. We need to work to elect people who will. The chapters will help us become more efficient in getting folks in the various legislative districts to call and email their legislators about pro-life public policy."

Parquette also worked to unite Protestants and Catholics in a common cause. "Many of our Protestant brothers and sisters saw RIRTL as a Catholic organization. I wanted to invite them to become more actively involved through RIRTL,

as we are the only non-denominational pro-life organization in the state." She has enjoyed seeing Protestants and Catholics work together on pro-life and other family issues at the RI General Assembly.

At the RIRTL Board Meeting on July 15, 2008, Parquette was voted to the Board of Directors. She will continue to work hand-in-hand with Barth E. Bracy, RIRTL's new Executive Director, to move the organization forward.

"As I pass the reins to our highly qualified new Director, I will do whatever I can to make the transition an easy one," Parquette said. "I will stay in touch with the staff at RIRTL as they have become my friends. I am committed to identifying and energizing the grassroots in our state through helping establish chapters. This is a cause you don't really retire from. It's the premiere moral issue of our time, and we need to encourage our friends and family to do what they can to be part of the battle. If not you or I, then who?"

In addition to continued pro-life involvement, Parquette looks forward to having more time to focus on her family. "I will try to have dinner ready for my husband when he gets home from a stressful and demanding job that he cannot retire from. I will enjoy the freedom to help my adult children as they begin their families. I may look into working as a lactation support consultant; I can't seem to get away from new mothers and babies. Life is precious, and I thank God, my church, and my family for allowing me to understand this basic concept and giving me the opportunity to express it through raising a family and working in the pro-life movement." 🙏

Save the Date – Your Vote Counts

One of the most pro-abortion legislators in the RI State House won the 2006 election by only 4 votes. Your vote in the upcoming elections will make a huge difference. But you can't vote unless you are registered.

To confirm that you are registered and find your polling place, you can visit www.sec.state.ri.us and click on "Voter Information Center." If you are not registered to vote, click on the "Register to vote" link in the right side navigation bar of the Voter Information page.

Registration deadline to vote in a party primary: Aug. 9
RI state primary: Sept. 9
Registration deadline to vote in general election: Oct. 4
State and national general election: Nov. 4