



For Immediate Release  
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### **Cedar River Clinics mourns Civil Rights Leader Dr. George Tiller**

*Yakima, WA.* Beverly Whipple, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Feminist Women’s Health Center in Yakima which operates Cedar River Clinics in Yakima, Tacoma and Renton that provide women’s reproductive health care, issued this statement about the assassination of Dr. George Tiller in Wichita.

“Dr. George Tiller was my friend. He was a rare and generous man, and one of a kind. I was repeatedly reminded that he was on the hit-list of a brutal mob every time I gave him a hug and hugged a steel bullet proof vest. “ The gunman must have known that he wore a bullet proof vest because George was shot in the head – while he was serving as an usher at church Sunday morning.

It was George who said, “To understand abortion you must understand the heart of a woman.”

Dr. Tiller was larger than life and it is unfathomable that he is gone.

I have a message from George that I saved in an email folder called “Gems from George.” He was talking about the threats against him. George wrote:

*Alexander Solzenitzen* was right: one should treasure relationships with his co-travelers on the journey of life each moment and day, because they may be taken from you, or you from them at any precise moment. Being involved in a philosophical Armageddon, such as slavery or abortion, adds dimension to one’s existence, crystallizes the vital priorities, and adds clarity to the purpose of being. The idea is to be in the purpose and neither live entirely for the purpose or die daily for the purpose.

Dr. Tiller had a knack of letting those he met KNOW they were co-travelers with him – me included. For over 25 years, I have admired George and considered him my friend and colleague.

Like abortion providers across America, we open our clinic doors today in honor and memory of our dear friend Dr. George Tiller. We dedicate our work this day to his philosophy of care:  
**“Kindness, Courtesy, Justice, Love, Respect.”**

Anyone who ever met George, heard him speak at a meeting, received health care from him, or knew him as a friend as I did, could see that he treated everyone around him with the same caring philosophy that was his clinic mantra, **“Kindness, Courtesy, Justice, Love. Respect.”** The tens of thousands of women across the nation who received health care through his devoted hands felt his compassion.

Losing Dr. George Tiller is beyond tragic; it is devastating for America. **He was truly a great civil rights leader.**

George’s words and ideas live on. I want to share with you some of the things he said and wrote.

“Abortion providers make FREEDOM possible in ways that we will never completely understand for hundreds of thousands of women and families each year.” (on the July 4, Independence Day) — Dr. George Tiller

“Abortion is not a cerebral or a reproductive issue. Abortion is a matter of the heart. For until one understands the heart of a woman, nothing else about abortion makes any sense at all.” — Dr. George Tiller

“Make no mistake, this battle is about self-determination by women of the direction and course of their lives and their family’s lives. Abortion is about women’s hopes and dreams. Abortion is a matter of survival for women.” — Dr. George Tiller

George used to also say “Attitude is Everything.”

Cedar River Clinics were given a U.S. flag that flew over Dr. Tiller’s clinic in Wichita when his health care center was under siege with hundreds of protestors during the summer of 2007. Dr. Tiller kept his doors open and hung an American flag over his clinic. Each day he would take that flag down, wrap it up and put up a new flag the next day. St. George – as his friends call him - offered these flags to many organizations so that we could be a part of his effort. We fly this flag all week as a testament to his commitment to freedom.

We must not be silent. Women’s civil and human rights are at stake. We must speak out against terrorism. **The anti-abortion movement created the atmosphere of hatred that allowed Dr. Tiller’s death as surely as if they had pulled the trigger themselves.**

**Murdering abortion providers is terrorism.** Our nation – our leaders – need to respond like it is terrorism. President Obama’s statement yesterday is a luke-warm start. But let’s not have a deafening silence from the rest of our leaders.

**In the United States today one in three American women will have at least one abortion in their lifetime.** We are your mothers, daughters, friends, teachers, students, co-workers, and colleagues. The circumstances guiding important life decisions such as whether or not to have an abortion, are rarely black and white. There are hundreds – even thousands of nuances that we might consider – making that decision difficult – or easy.

Regarding these decisions, George said, “Trust Women.”

Cedar River Clinics provides abortion care, birth control and well woman care in Renton (Seattle), Tacoma and Yakima, Washington serving over 7000 women annually.

Cedar River Clinics is a nonprofit organization providing abortion care so that women may decide their destinies. We have a vision of a world where all women freely make their own decisions regarding their bodies, reproduction, and sexuality — a world where women can fulfill their own unique potential and live healthy whole lives.

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