

LDI Blackmun Wall

Preston, Vanessa **BW**

On January 22, 1980, the seven-year anniversary of Roe v. Wade, Vanessa underwent a 16-week abortion at Fairmount Center in Dallas. During the procedure, she had a seizure, then went into cardiac arrest. The abortionist, Dr. Curtis Boyd, and a nurse began CPR, and were able to resuscitate her. However, she went into a second arrest before the ambulance arrived. She was stabilized and transferred to a hospital where she became unresponsive. About 40 minutes into exploratory surgery, Vanessa went into cardiac arrest again. She received a total of 24 units of blood, and efforts to resuscitate her were continued for 90 minutes. Despite heroic efforts, Vanessa died that day. She was 22 years old.

An autopsy found that there were multiple vaginal punctures around the cervix and that the placenta was still attached to the uterus. The autopsy concluded that Vanessa “suffered a cardiac arrest due to the sudden entry of amniotic fluid into her blood stream during a legal abortion. The entry of this fluid into the blood stream created a condition in which the blood could not clot properly. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation was successful in restarting the heart, but also resulted in a relatively small tear of the liver. This liver injury would not normally be life threatening. However, in the presence of abnormal blood coagulation, the result was extensive hemorrhage into the abdominal cavity which could not be controlled at surgery.” The cause of death was listed as amniotic fluid embolism and disseminated intravascular coagulopathy (DIC). DIC is a severe disorder in which the body, in response to initial clotting, mistakenly produces too much anti-clotting substance. It causes uncontrolled hemorrhaging and tissue death, and is a recognized potential complication of induced abortion. Dr. Curtis Boyd was a co-founder and board member of the National Abortion Federation, and Fairmount was a member clinic in good standing. (The Dallas Morning News: “Abortion patient dies after seizure,” January 24, 1980, ““Initial report exonerates clinic in abortion death,” January 25, 1980; Texas Autopsy Report No. 0190-80-0095; Texas Certificate of Death # 07018; “Fatal embolism during legal induced abortion,” Atrash, Cheek, Hogue, American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, 162:4, April 1990, p. 986-90; “Fatal Pulmonary Embolism During Legal Induced Abortion in the United States from 1972-1985,” Lawson, Herschel W., MD, Atrash, Hani K., MD, MPH, Franks, Adele L., MD, American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Vol. 162, No. 4, April 1990, p. 986-990.)