

Thomas H. Gresinger, OB/GYN and abortion provider, dies at 82

By **Bart Barnes** May 3

Thomas H. Gresinger, an obstetrician-gynecologist who delivered thousands of babies in a 50-year medical career and became a leading Washington-area abortion provider after the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion, died April 22 at a family home in Fort Washington, Md. He was 82.

The cause was cancer, his stepdaughter-in-law, Felicia Clark, said.

Until the last year of his life, Dr. Gresinger was medical director and laboratory director at the Falls Church Healthcare Center abortion clinic, a facility he joined in 2003. He incorporated abortions into his private Northern Virginia obstetrics/gynecological practice following the *Roe v. Wade* case that legalized abortions, and he also provided abortions at a newly opened Virginia abortion center.

In the 1970s and 1980s, he established abortion clinics in the District of Columbia, Maryland, Florida, Hawaii and Louisiana. He trained doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners in post-abortion care.

As he got older, Dr. Gresinger ended his affiliation with most of these centers, concentrating on his practice in Northern Virginia. In 2013, he received the "Unsung Hero" award of the National Abortion Federation for work on behalf of women choosing abortions.

He received threats from antiabortionists. At one point, U.S. marshals were assigned to protect his Fort Washington home. One of his centers was bombed. Another was severely damaged by arson.

"I don't feel that I'm in any physical danger," Dr. Gresinger told The Washington Post in 1985. "I just find these people annoying and extremely presumptuous, that they can ignore the views of everyone else but themselves. I do mind the ones that hang over the fence, harassing my patients with grisly pictures of very late abortions. You should see these young ladies when they come through the door, collapsing in the nurses' arms one after another."

In 2000, a Fairfax County Circuit Court jury returned a \$2.1 million award in a malpractice lawsuit against Dr. Gresinger filed by the family of a woman who had died of cervical cancer. The jury found that the doctor, as the woman's gynecologist, had repeatedly failed to diagnose and treat the cancer in the years before her death in 1998.

Thomas Hamlin Gresinger, a resident of Flint Hill, Va., was born July 14, 1933, in Chicago. After graduating in 1951 from the private Hotchkiss School in Lakeville, Conn., he received a bachelor's degree in 1955 from Williams College in Massachusetts and earned a medical degree in 1961 from George Washington University, where he also completed an obstetrics/gynecology residency.

His avocations included competitive sailing.

His marriages to the former Rosanne "Petey" Prescott and Susan Mann ended in divorce.

Survivors include his wife since 2006, Sheila Dwyer Gresinger of Flint Hill; two daughters from his first marriage, Victoria LaPointe of Central Valley, N.Y., and Anne Gresinger of Portland, Maine; and two sons from his second marriage, Thomas H. Gresinger Jr. of Rowayton, Conn., and Robert Gresinger of Washington.

Other survivors include six stepchildren, Christopher Floyd of Washington, Debbie Brunelli of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Patti Stronko of Nokesville, Va., Michael Brunelli of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Peter Brunelli of Washington, Va., and Brigid Brunelli of Pompano Beach, Fla.; 15 grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

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