

[Next profile](#) | [Previous profile](#) | [Sept/Oct Contents](#) | [Gazette home](#)

Alumni Profile

CLASS OF '78

Taking a Stand — On Screen



Dr. Wayne Goldner M'78, and abortion protesters outside Elliot Hospital.

Dr. Wayne Goldner M'78 has delivered many babies. He also devotes a tiny fraction of his Bedford, New Hampshire, practice to performing abortions. As a result, he says, a few precautions are necessary.

“Eighteen halogen lights come on when I drive into my driveway.

My wife, [Laura Goldner GEd'78] puts shades on all the windows. We have dogs, and we have a really good alarm system. Every single morning when I get up and leave the house,” he adds, “I think there could be some crazy person with a gun out there.”

Goldner, one of a dwindling number of obstetrician-gynecologists who perform abortions as part of their practices, and his family are the subjects of a documentary by Cine Qua Non Films, *Live Free or Die*, due to air Sept. 26 on PBS's “P.O.V.” It was shown at the International Human Rights Watch Film Festival held at the Lincoln Center this summer.

Despite the subtle ostracism that his choice to provide abortions has brought him in the medical community and the more obvious picketing that occurs outside his office each week, Goldner persists because he doesn't think anonymous clinics “are a fair way to do medicine. Patients shouldn't have to walk past armed guards, through a metal detector, past bulletproof glass to see a doctor who's been flown in from 35 miles away.”

Two producers from New York came to town to interview Goldner back in 1996 while he was fighting to change a hospital merger (later overturned) which he believed compromised women's reproductive health. The filmmakers then decided to do a documentary about him. His first reaction was, “You're crazy.”

But after talking it over, explains Laura Goldner, the family made a decision to go through with it. “I guess we figured if we are going to take a stand, we're going to go public and say it like it is.”

The film crew followed the Goldners over a one-and-a-half

year period. “At first I was mortified,” she says. “I’d be sitting at a baseball game and Wayne would show up with the camera man. My daughter [Heather, now a sophomore at Penn] gave them permission to film her coming out of school one day, so they set up a tripod outside the school.”

Goldner believes his cooperation with the film was the best decision of his life, even though it makes him a bigger target for potential violence. “I will not be intimidated by terrorists,” he says.

Although the family has found their neighbors and town to be generally supportive of them, their house has been picketed and broken into, and Dr. Goldner was banned from teaching his abstinence-based, sex-education course in one local school after protesters decried the idea of an “abortionist” lecturing children.

“But what really gets me,” Laura Goldner says, “is not the people out there picketing—they’re standing up for what they believe in—[but] the people whom we thought were our supporters, who to our face tell us one thing and behind our backs say another.”

Although they have coped with the publicity in different ways, Laura Goldner observes, their three children have weathered the pressure. Heather has even used her father’s curriculum to volunteer as a health educator in West Philadelphia public schools, trying to prevent teen pregnancies. “She’s very much like her father. She’s gotten that activism gene somewhere along the way.” ■

[Next profile](#) | [Previous profile](#) | [Sept/Oct Contents](#) | [Gazette home](#)

Copyright 2000 [The Pennsylvania Gazette](#) Last modified 8/22/00