

# SOUTHERN BAPTISTS FOR LIFE

## RECORDS

AR 766



Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives  
Nashville, Tennessee

January, 2006

Updated September, 2012

# Southern Baptists for Life Records

## AR 766

### Summary

Main Entry: Southern Baptists for Life Records

Date Span: 1980 – 1991

Abstract: Official files of the Southern Baptist for Life organization. Collection contains correspondence with staff of the Christian Life Commission, Home Mission Board, Annuity Board, and Sunday School Board, as well as Board of Director's correspondence, minutes, legal documents, denominational agency files, pro-life church organization files, pro-life newsletters, and general information on the pro-life movement.

Size: 5 linear ft. (11 boxes)

Collection #: AR 766

### Historical Note

Southern Baptists for Life was organized in 1984 by a group of Southern Baptists concerned over the abortion issue in America. The purpose of the organization was to “provide an organization through which Southern Baptists can unite to work for and witness to the Biblical view of the sanctity of all human life, irrespective of the stage of biological development, and to encourage the church and society to embody those Biblical truths....” Rudy Yakym served as one of the early leaders in the formation of the SBL. Larry Lewis, who later headed the Home Mission Board, was one of the earlier supporters of the pro-life group. In 1986, J. Kirk Shrewsbury was employed as the Executive Director of the organization. SBL produced a newsletter, developed Sanctity of Life Sunday material for use in Sunday school, and urged Southern Baptist Convention agencies to adopt pro-life policies related to their area of work.

The greatest achievement of Southern Baptists for Life was the placement of the Sanctity of Life Sunday on the Southern Baptist denominational calendar. Kirk Shrewsbury's efforts in this endeavor were sometimes opposed by denominational agencies who felt that the action would too closely align Southern Baptists with the radical religious right. In spite of the opposition, the Sanctity of Life Sunday was placed on the denominational calendar in January to mark the Supreme Court ruling that legalized abortion. Southern Baptists for Life dissolved in 1991. By that time, the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention had adopted a pro-life stance more in line with the organizers and supporters of SBL. The Board of Directors no longer felt the need to continue the organization.

**Scope and Content Note**

The records of the Southern Baptists for Life were deposited with the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives in 1991. The records were closed to staff and researchers for fifteen years – not to be opened until January 1, 2006 – at which time the deposited records became the property of the Library and Archives.

The collection includes significant correspondence with the staff of the Christian Life Commission, the Home Mission Board, the Annuity Board, and the Sunday School Board. The collection includes five linear ft. of material, placed in eleven document boxes, and includes correspondence, Board of Director's correspondence, minutes, legal documents, denominational agency files, pro-life church organizations files, pro-life newsletters, material on crisis pregnancy centers, and general information on the pro-life movement. Books on the pro-life movement are also a part of the collection. Also included is correspondence from the following individuals: Rudolph C. Yakym, Jr., Richard Land, Rich D. Moore, Larry Lewis, Zig Ziglar, Paul Pressler, James T. Draper, James L. Holly, and William E. Hull. The records are arranged in alphabetical order by folder title and cover the period 1984 – 1991.

The collection not only documents the work of this organization to encourage Southern Baptists to adopt a more aggressive pro-life policy, but it also documents some of the work of other church related organizations, such as Lutherans for Life, Baptists for Life, and Episcopalians for Life. The collection includes information on the pro-life movement, in general, with information on Americans Against Abortion, National Committee on a Pro-Life Amendment, and the National Right to Life Committee. Also found in the collection is material related to the Supreme Court nomination of Robert Bork, the Bush-Dukakis election of 1984, and Supreme Court cases related to abortion.

**Arrangement**

Arranged in alphabetical order by folder title

**Provenance**

Collection deposited with the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives in 1991, with explicit instructions to be closed to the staff and researchers until January 1, 2006, when it became the property of the SBHLA

**Preferred Citation**

Southern Baptists for Life Records, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee

**Access Restrictions**

Closed to staff and researchers from 1991 until January 1, 2006

**Subject Terms**

Draper, James T., 1935 –  
Holley, James L.

Hull, William E.  
Land, Richard D., 1946 –  
Lewis, Larry L., 1935 –  
Moore, Rich D.  
Pressler, Paul  
Shrewsbury, J. Kirk  
Kakym, Rudolph C., Jr.  
Ziglar, Zig  
National Right to Life Committee  
Southern Baptist Convention. Christian Life Commission  
Southern Baptists for Life – History  
Abortion – Religious aspects  
Pro-life movement – United States  
Pro-life movement – Religious aspects – Christianity

### **Related Materials**

Southern Baptist Convention. Christian Life Commission. Resource Files. AR 138-2.  
Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives.

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- 1.2 American Life Lobby, 1984
- 1.3 Americans Against Abortion, 1986
- 1.4 Americans Against Abortion – Last Days, 1986 – 1987
- 1.5 Americans United for Life, 1987 – 1991
- 1.6 Annual Reports, 1990
- 1.7 Annuity Board, SBC, 1986 – 1989
- 1.8 Articles – Church related pro-life activities, 1988 – 1991
- 1.9 Baker, David – “The Broken Jar” – Sanctity of life sermon – First Baptist Church, Belton, TX (audio recording)
- 1.10 Baptist Hospitals, 1984 – 1989
- 1.11 Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, 1986 – 1989
- 1.12 Baptists for Life – General Association of Regular Baptists, 1987 – 1991
- 1.13 Book – Andrusko, Dave (editor) “Triumph of Hope: A pro-life revival of 1988”
- 1.14 Book – Andrusko, Dave – “To Rescue the Future: The Pro-life movement in the 1980s”

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- 2.1 Book – Willke, J. C. – “Abortion: Questions and Answers”
- 2.2 Book – Willke, J. C. – “Handbook on Abortion”
- 2.3 Bork, Robert – Supreme Court Nomination, 1987
- 2.4 Bork, Robert – Supreme Court Nomination, 1987
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- 6.1 Home Mission Board, 1986 – 1987
- 6.2 Kerr, Fred – “90 Days for Life: The Jailhouse Journal of Pro-life Advocate,” 1989
- 6.3 Legal Documents, 1984 – 1991
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- 6.5 Legislative mailings, 1987 – 1989
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- 6.7 Minutes, 1986 – 1991
- 6.8 Moravian for Life, 1990
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