

There is one perfectly good and "objective" way to determine whether a person's life has "dignity": by listening to the person concerned and by taking her or his wishes seriously—be this to undergo what many of us would regard as excessively burdensome treatment, or to request active help in dying. For many people, dignity begins and ends with the exercise of free choice.

Finally, a quick and merciful response to Professor Barry's sweeping final assertion that euthanasia is to be equated with the killing of the elderly, dying, disabled, and the sick because they are sick, disabled or terminally ill. Professor Barry conflates the important distinction between voluntary euthanasia and other forms of euthanasia or unjustified killings. Voluntary euthanasia is not about killing people *because* they are sick or disabled or terminally ill; it is about respect for a person's autonomy and self-determination; about assisting a terminally or incurably ill person to die—not because she is incurably or terminally ill, but because she *wants* to die.

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#### Reference

1. See Helga Kuhse: *The Sanctity-of-Life Doctrine in Medicine—A Critique*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987.

#### A Statement from Guerry R. Thornton, Jr.

To the Editor:

In regard to the article I submitted for publication in your July 1986 issue that dealt with interuterine devices and the law [*Law, Medicine & Health Care* 1986, 14(1): 4-12], I want to issue a formal apology to the Editorial Board and acknowledge my unpermitted use of certain sections from the treatise *Obstetrics/Gynecology & the Law*. I recognize the fact that I failed to reference sections of this book in my article, and that this omission made significant parts of my article unoriginal. Additionally, two phrases from sentences in my concluding section were similar to statements made by Roger L. Tuttle in his 1983 article, which appeared in the *Oklahoma Bar Journal*.

Although I did not use conclusions independently reached by Mr. Tuttle, I realize that legitimate questions have been raised with regard to this content.

Because of these errors in my article, I recognize the fact that I did not comply with the academic standards of your journal.

Please understand that I did not intentionally use this material in my article, and the unpermitted use resulted from mistakes made during the research process. Beyond this unpermitted use, I am hopeful that the remaining portions of my article made a meaningful contribution to the medical and legal aspects related to interuterine devices.

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