Today we lost a hero. A friend and colleague who epitomized courage, strength, and bold vision; who fought for what he believed, and who made a difference. Ron Cranford worked for over 30 years to create and defend a right to die as a practicing neurologist and as part of the birth and maturation of bioethics. His imprint is on every significant court case, national commission, task force, committee or conference related to end of life and right to die over that time. He worked on behalf of patients, and changed medical practice and policy in the process. He was a supporter of bioethics in Minnesota from before the founding of the Center, and has been a valued colleague and friend for all of our history.

For Ron, bioethics was about more than talking or writing. He was among the first and best to really do bioethics. Not everyone agreed with him, but all were struck by the certainty of his convictions and his willingness to fight for what he believed. Somehow he mixed all that with a healthy dose of humor, often being the first to laugh at himself. Ron brought all that to his fight with cancer, and when the time came, he died as he had lived—with insight, humor, and clarity; and on his own terms. It was one last example for us. We will miss him.

– Jeffrey Kahn
“Mama!” she heard Eva’s thin but soaring cry at the instant that she thrust the child away from her and rose from the concrete with a clumsy stumbling motion. “Take the baby!” she called out. “Take my little girl!”

At this point the aide — with a careful gentleness that Sophie would try without success to forget — tugged at Eva’s hand and led her away into the waiting legion of the damned. She would forever retain a dim impression that the child had continued to look back, beseeching. But because she was now almost completely blinded by salty, thick, copious tears, she was spared whatever expression Eva wore, and she was always grateful for that. For in the bleak honesty of her heart she knew that she would never have been able to tolerate it, driven nearly mad as she was by her last glimpse of that vanishing small form.”

Sophie comes to mind when I happen across situations where life has gotten suddenly and twistedly sideways on the unexpectant. When, for example, I read of the Sri Lankan tsunami; of a mother’s tale of immersion in the deluge, clinging to her husband and child; and of losing the strength to hold fast to both of them, of having to let one go. Sophie emerged, too, when I read of children taken hostage at their school in Beslan, Russia, and of parents with multiple captive children being allowed to remove only one. How do you decide which hand to release, which name to give?

Or when, as a doctor or a nurse at Memorial Medical Center in Katrina-ravaged New Orleans, you are faced with a different sort of dilemma: how to deliver care to critically ill and dying patients when your hospital is surrounded by floodwater, has no electricity, water or sanitation, and the indoor temperature exceeds one hundred degrees. When the floodwaters have shorted out the generators that power the mechanical ventilators, the dialysis machines and other life-sustaining equipment. When you fear for your patients’ safety and for your own in a context of seeming social anarchy – of looting and worse. When it is now four days since the hurricane, and only an infrequent boat or helicopter happens along to evacuate patients. When the sickest patients have do-not-resuscitate orders and are in extremis, suffering, frightened, dying.

Do you palliate their physical and psychic pain as best you can with comfort and morphine? Do you step further down the path and decide what kind of death these patients will, and will not, have? Do you euthanize them with morphine, engage in mercy killing?

You do. Such, at least has been alleged in the popular press. An allegation that has prompted an investigation by the Louisiana Attorney General’s office, with findings due imminently.

As many as 140 patients in hospitals and nursing homes in the New Orleans area died during or shortly after the storm. The Orleans Parish Coroner listed “Katrina-related” causes of death for over 40 patients at Memorial Medical Center, and for 34 residents at St. Rita’s Nursing Home. As many as six hospitals and thirteen nursing homes in Louisiana, including Memorial and St. Rita’s, may be under investigation by the Attorney General.

The allegations themselves, and the subsequent investigation have occasioned widespread moral outrage; both among those who believe that physicians should never kill, and those who believe that mercy killing under such brutal circumstances is an act of courage and compassion and should not be punished.

Most of us in the worlds of bioethics and philosophy are wary of moral absolutes. We might maintain that there are few, if any, of them.
charged with manslaughter. He was subsequently convicted, the court finding that his duty as a seaman was to “protect, not sacrifice” those entrusted to his care. In sympathy with Holmes, and the desperate circumstances under which he had acted, the judge sentenced him to a term of only six months, and fined him twenty dollars.

When I hear the absolutistic statement, “doctors should never kill,” or “euthanasia is always wrong,” I am reminded of Adina Blady Szwajger’s story. She is a pediatrician, who, during the Holocaust, worked as a twenty-two year old nurse (she had by then completed two years of medical school) at the Warsaw Children’s Hospital in the Warsaw ghetto. Most of the children in the hospital were dying of some combination of starvation, typhus, or tuberculosis. In her bleak, heartbreaking reminiscence, I Remember Nothing More, Szwajger tells of naked and starving children crying and begging to be admitted to the hospital and shows photographs of children wrapped in newspaper and lying in the gutter, dead from starvation or infectious disease. And she tells of euthanizing an entire children’s ward with morphine so that dying children could not be loaded onto trucks to be taken and killed elsewhere, or murdered in their beds by Ukrainian guards:

“I took the morphine upstairs. Dr. Margolis was there and I told her what I wanted to do. So we took a spoon and went to the infants’ room. And just as, during those two years of real work in the hospital, I had bent down over the little beds, so now I poured this last medicine into those tiny mouths. Only Dr. Margolis was with me. And downstairs, there was screaming because the Szaulis and the Germans were already there, taking the sick from the wards to the cattle trucks.”

Adina Blady Szwajger and Dr. Margolis made a fundamental decision about what kind of death their young patients were due. Some critics would (and have in the New Orleans Memorial Medical Center case), argue the absolute stance — that extreme circumstances never occasion or justify mercy killing by physicians. It is an understandable position to take. A more cogent outlook, I believe, would allow for exceptions, for contingencies. I would rather that my child die the gentle death administered by Szwajger at Warsaw Children’s Hospital, than die a violent death at the hands of soldiers. What I would have wanted for a loved one at Memorial Medical Center I cannot say, not having been there, and not knowing the facts being unearthed in the investigation. But I am sympathetic to those who face impossible choices. What can you do but your best?

This isn’t the happiness business. Let us hope that when the Louisiana Attorney General makes his findings, and as the case plays out, that compassion, not absolutism, is the order of the day.

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New Concentration in Health Law & Bioethics

University of Minnesota law students may now elect a concentration in Health Law & Bioethics.

Beginning in Fall 2006, Law students at the University of Minnesota Law School may declare a concentration in their area of interest. The Health Law & Bioethics Concentration allows students to focus their studies on health care delivery, public health law and ethics, international health, or issues in bioethics. Concentrations are available to all JD and LLM students, including those pursuing dual degrees. Students who have successfully completed the

Concentration will receive a special certificate upon graduation. The Law School is seeking approval so that students may also request that their transcript state that the requirements of the Concentration have been fulfilled.

The Health Law & Bioethics concentration requires 12 credits and a combination of required and recommended courses. To enroll in the Concentration or to receive detailed information about requirements, contact Ann Hagen at 612-625-3356 or hagen055@umn.edu.
Mila Aroskar, EdD, received a Doctor of Science, honoris causa degree awarded from Creighton University. “Her numerous contributions to the field of bioethics, including the administrative role of developing ethically supportable policies in today’s difficult and complex health care environment, exemplify the qualities Creighton University wishes to recognize.”

Debra DeBruin, PhD, has been appointed Director of Education, Center for Bioethics, University of Minnesota.

Barbara Elliott, PhD, Department of Family Medicine, has been chosen as the recipient of the Chancellor’s Award for Distinguished Research for 2005-2006 from the University of Minnesota, Duluth. Her outcomes research focuses on access to care for the underserved.

Jeffrey Kahn, PhD, MPH, has been named to serve on the Recombinant DNA Advisory Committee for the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Mary Faith Marshall, PhD, was appointed member of the Committee on Ethics for 2006-07 of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

David Mayo, PhD, Center Faculty Associate, is retiring after 30 years as Professor of Philosophy, College of Liberal Arts, University of Minnesota, Duluth. As well as teaching in philosophy, his research focused on ethical issues in euthanasia, suicide, and AIDS and privacy. His books include AIDS, Testing and Privacy (University of Utah Press, 1989), and Suicide: The Philosophical Issues (St. Martin’s Press, 1981).

Muriel Ryden, Emeritus Faculty, School of Nursing, received a Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Minnesota College of Education where she earned her doctorate in 1982. One hundred alumni were selected for this award as part of the college’s 100th anniversary. Ryden was cited for her work on integrating ethics into undergraduate nursing curricula.

Bioethics Courses Offered Fall 2006

BTHX 5100
Introduction to Clinical Ethics (3 cr)
This course addresses the ethical issues inherent in the provider/patient encounter. It is designed to foster interdisciplinary study and dialogue about these important moral issues. It will be relevant to a broad population of students.

BTHX 5210
Ethics of Human Subjects Research (3 cr)
This course will address fundamental issues in the ethics of human subjects research, to include a basic understanding of the Federal oversight system for human subjects research and placing the ethical issues in human subjects research into the broader context of the responsible conduct of research.

BTHX 5325
Biomedical Ethics (3 cr)
A survey of major topics and issues in biomedical ethics including patients’ rights and duties, informed consent, confidentiality, ethical issues in medical research, the initiation and termination of medical treatment, euthanasia, abortion, and the allocation of medical resources.

BTHX 5000
Social Context of Health and Illness (3 cr)
Examines the social context in which contemporary meanings of health and illness are understood by providers and patients. Course readings will be drawn from history, social science, literature, and first person accounts. Ethical implications of these meanings will be included.

For additional course offerings by Center faculty contact the Center at 612-624-9440 or see our website at www.bioethics.umn.edu.
**Calendar of Events**

**JUNE 21**
Carol Tauer, PhD, will speak on “End-of-Life Decision Making for Persons with Disabilities” at the Dakota Communities, Eagan, MN. For information, call 612-624-9440.

**JUNE 28, JULY 6, 12, 19**
“The Body on Display: Controversies and Conversations” community forum series sponsored by the Academic Health Center, Weisman Art Museum, Center for Bioethics, and Center for Medical Humanities, University of Minnesota. On 6/28 Ken Roberts, PhD, John Eyler, PhD and Dave Lee will speak on “Anatomy: Why We Dissect”; 7/6 Mary Faith Marshall, PhD, will speak on “Boundaries and Bodies: Cultural and Religious Perspectives”; 7/12 Lyndel King, PhD and John Eyler, PhD will speak on “Anatomy as Art, Art as Anatomy”; 7/19 Jeffrey Kahn, PhD, MPH, will lead a panel discussion on “Stiff Morality: The Ethics of Using Bodies.” For information, visit www.ahc.umn.edu/outreach/bodyondisplay.

**JULY 13-14**

**JULY 27**
Maryam Valapour, MD, will speak on “How Voluntary is Consent for Living Donation?” at the World Transplant Congress, Boston, MA. For information, call 612-624-9440.

**AUG 8**
Jeffrey Kahn, PhD, MPH, will speak on “Ethical Issues in Living Organ Donation: US Perspective” at the 8th World Congress of Bioethics, Beijing, China. For information, visit www.chinamed.com.cn/IAB2006.

**SEPT 15**
Jeffrey Kahn, PhD, MPH, will speak at the University of Michigan Medical School, Ann Arbor, MI. For information, call 612-624-9440.

**SEPT 20**
Jeffrey Kahn, PhD, MPH, will participate as a panel moderator “Conflicts, Compliance and Enforcement: Government Priorities and Initiatives”; “Guidelines and Performance: Creating a Culture of Ethics”; and “Applications in the Real World: Defining Boundaries and Managing Innovation” at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation conference “A National Dialogue on Biomedical Conflicts of Interest,” Cleveland, OH. For information, visit www.clevelandclinic.org/coisummit.

**SEPT 25-26**

**OCT 26-29**
David Satin, MD, will speak on “Pay-For-Performance Update: Americans Should Learn From Britain and New Zealand” at the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities (ASBH) Annual Meeting, Denver, CO. For information, visit www.asbh.org.

**OCT 28**
Dianne Bartels, RN, MA, PhD, will speak on “Current Bioethical Challenges: From Stem Cells to Plan B” at the American College of Clinical Pharmacy, St. Louis, MO. For information, call 612-624-9440.

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**Fall Bioethics Seminar Series – hold these dates**

*Continuing Medical Education (CME) credit available*

Center seminars have been designated to meet University of Minnesota continuing medical education requirements and provides 1 contact hour in continuing education (.1 CME) for each seminar. Registration is required if you are attending for CME credit.

Seminars are held from 12:15–1:30 pm in 2–122 Molecular & Cellular Biology building (MCB) on the University of Minnesota campus. Previous seminars may also be accessed on our website in BREEZE format at www.bioethics.umn.edu.

**OCT 4**
“Surgically Shaping Children” by Erik Parens, PhD, The Hastings Center.

**OCT 13**
“Conscription of Cadaveric Organs for Transplantation: At Least Let’s Talk About It” by Aaron Spital, MD, Mount Sinai School of Medicine.

**NOV 3**
“Oath Betrayed: Torture, Medical Complicity and the War on Terror” by Steven Miles, MD, Center for Bioethics, University of Minnesota.

**DEC 8**
Title — To be announced by Maryam Valapour, MD, Center for Bioethics, University of Minnesota.
Recent Faculty Publications

**BOOKS**


**ARTICLES**

