



David Gittrich, Development Director of Kansans for Life, passed on to eternal life yesterday evening, October 17, 2017.

### **Rosary and Funeral**

The Rosary for David will be held on Sunday, October 22nd, at 7:00 p.m. Funeral services will be on Monday, October 23rd, at 10:30 a.m. Both are located at the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church in Wichita, KS. For memorial details, please visit this page.

### **Early beginnings**

Born December 20th, 1946, David was raised in Wichita where he attended Blessed Sacrament School and then Kapaun Mount Carmel High School (class of 1964). His father owned 4 grocery stores, and when David grew up, he managed the Maize Food Mart.

One day, his best friend from school, John Shay, told David he had a film he wanted David to see. Now this was in 1982 -- and it was not as simple as a DVD or even a VHS tape. Rather, John brought a reel-to-reel film projector over to David's house to show him the film. It was a pro-life documentary called "Assignment Life."

David was committed to the pro-life cause from that day on.

He became involved in Life, Inc., a local pro-life group in Wichita. In 1983, some members of Life, Inc. joined with pro-life leaders in Kansas City and Topeka to form a new state-wide pro-life group, Kansans for Life. David was one of the signers on the incorporation papers for KFL, but through the next few years, he was still primarily involved with local efforts by Life, Inc.

### **Kansans for Life Executive Director**

David's pro-life work was on a volunteer basis until 1989, when the Gittrich family sold the Maize Food Mart and David was asked to become the executive director of Kansans for Life. The previous two executive directors had quit because they needed better-paying jobs in order to support a family.

David, as a single man, was able to accept this rather low-paying job and was willing to spend evenings and weekends at pro-life meetings all over the state, helping people organize pro-life groups in their local communities. At one point there

were 85 active, organized chapters of Kansans for Life in communities all over the state. This was due almost entirely to David's efforts to help start these groups. David would serve as Executive Director of KFL from 1989 through 2000.

### **Political activism**

At first, David avoided politics, even saying several times that if the pro-life movement ever got involved in politics, he would quit. Once, David stormed out of a meeting because they were talking too much about politics -- fellow member Mike Farmer followed him out and persuaded David into coming back.

Of course, David eventually began to see that political involvement was necessary to achieve our goals, and in his later years, people knew him as one of the most politically-involved activists in the state. His activism was always personal -- in fact, at every Capitol rally he would know each legislator by name, the legislator's hometown, and even the pro-lifers in the hometown!

One of the last things he did for Kansans for Life, before cancer made him too sick to work any more, was teach our September "Campaign School" to potential pro-life candidates for office.

### **Shepherding the pro-life movement**

From 2000-2002, he moved to Kansas City and worked as the Respect Life Director for the Catholic Archdiocese of Kansas City. He returned to Wichita, and Kansans for Life, in 2002, serving as Development Director from that time on, until he lost his battle with cancer.

For everyone who wanted to help the pro-life movement, David always would provide a way for that person to help, no matter what a person's abilities or disabilities. Unable to leave home? He would find something the volunteer could do from home. A professional who had a specific skill? He would find a way to use that skill. A volunteer with a mental disability? He would find a task suited to the person's abilities.

We had an adult woman, Becky, with Down's Syndrome who regularly volunteered at the office for decades, and David made sure she had work she could do, and made sure she felt she was appreciated --

just as he did for all of KFL's volunteers. Becky told him every time he walked by, "I really do like your hair," and he would respond with appreciation for the compliment even when he had hardly any hair left to like!

### **Changing Hearts and Lives**

David's favorite projects were public education projects -- projects that would "turn on the light bulb" for the public about the humanity of the child in the womb. Here are a few examples of his innovative projects over the years:

**After the Choice:** He raised money to show the film, "After the Choice," on television. This film features a series of interviews with women who have had abortions.

**Chris Project:** He promoted a series of church bulletin announcements, telling the story of a baby named "Chris" from the time of conception on March 25 until the baby's birth on December 25. Each weekly installment contained a fact or two about fetal development.

**Lesson Plans Project:** Kansans for Life compiled a series of lesson plans which teachers can use in schools or Sunday school classes, with ten to twelve lessons for each grade. The lessons may be used independently (the teacher can pick which one or two she likes best) or the teacher may use the entire series. These lessons are available for free download on our website here.

**Radio Ad Campaign:** David produced a series of radio ads featuring an unborn baby named "Echo." The ads were intended to help people see the baby in the womb as a human being with a personality. KFL had auditions for the voice of "Echo" and a local child was chosen to record the ads, which then played on radio stations all over the state.

### **Share your memories & honor David's life**

If you have a favorite memory of David, we would love to hear your story. Please submit your story [here](#) and include your name and phone number or email address.

We would like to invite you to our Evening of Appreciation for David on Nov. 8. The M.C. will be Matt Schlapp and several other friends will. For info see the [event page](#), or call 316-687-5433. Call as well if you have any photos of David you could share!