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For immediate release:

Friday, June 3, 2011

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JACK KEVORKIAN DEAD AT 83

WASHINGTON – Jack Kevorkian, the Michigan pathologist known the world over as "Dr. Death" for his push to legalize euthanasia and assisted suicide in the United States, died in a Detroit-area hospital at age 83. He readily admitted to assisting in the deaths of more than 100 people.

"Many of the victims on whom Jack Kevorkian preyed were people with disabilities who had no terminal illness; one was simply old. In at least five cases autopsies were unable to confirm any disease at all," observed Burke J. Balch, J.D., director of National Right to Life's Robert Powell Center for Medical Ethics.

Kevorkian's "suicide machine" drew worldwide attention when the CBS program "60 Minutes" aired footage, shot by Kevorkian himself, as he administered lethal drugs to Thomas Youk, a man suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease. The tape quickly became evidence in a murder trial that sentenced Kevorkian to 10 to 25 years in prison for second-degree murder. He was paroled in 2007.

His often inflammatory efforts to legalize assisted suicide as a constitutional "right" were soundly rejected by the unanimous 1997 Supreme Court decision in *Washington v. Glucksberg* in which the Court held that assisted suicide was not a constitutional right. The case overturned a previous decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

"While some euthanasia advocates have sought to distance themselves from his bizarre positions and tactics, his tragic legacy illustrates the dangers to the most vulnerable when compassionate, humane responses to depression or disability are replaced with death as an acceptable final solution," Balch added.

Founded in 1968, the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC), the federation of 50 state right-to-life affiliates and more than 3,000 local chapters, is the nation's oldest and largest grassroots pro-life organization. Recognized as the flagship of the pro-life movement, NRLC works through legislation and education to protect innocent human life from abortion, infanticide, assisted suicide and euthanasia.

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