



It's a choice, not a child: Ms. Feldt and her husband with a picture of their most recent grandchild.

LIFEWATCH

No guts, no Gloria

New Planned Parenthood chieftain plans aggressive tenure

BY JOE MAXWELL

Move over Faye Wattleton. Step aside Patricia Ireland. There's a new queen of pro-abortion rhetoric. Last month abortion advocates and opponents got their first glimpse of the new executive director of the 80-year-old Planned Parenthood Federation of America. And by all indications, 54-year-old Gloria Feldt plans to take no prisoners. She told the National Press Club that the choices American families face are clear: Plan your parenthood or—horror of horrors—face “perpetual parenthood.”

In her address, titled “Sex and Sensibilities,” Mrs. Feldt made it clear that PPEFA would reestablish a full-court press for sex education, contraceptive distribution, and abortion. “Personally, I will not feel that my job as PPEFA’s president is done until reproductive choices, health care, and education are valued as moral necessities, codified as legal rights, and made accessible to all in a dignified setting that address the needs of diverse communities,” she told the gathering of mostly national media.

Among the non-press attending Mrs. Feldt’s coming-out party was Doug Scott, 38, now the head of the pro-life watchdog

group, Life Decisions International. Mr. Scott and Mrs. Feldt locked horns in the past when he was Arizona Right to Life executive director and she was PPEFA executive director for central and north Arizona. He remembers her as a “go-for-the-throat kind of person. . . . She can be very personable. But if she decides she wants to take you on, she can just be vicious about it. She’s smart.”

Apparently this is just the sort of person that PPEFA leaders think their organization now needs. No more Pamela Moraldo, Mrs. Feldt’s less-combative predecessor. With abortion advocacy losing ground rhetorically in recent years, PPEFA now looks to Mrs. Feldt to reestablish their turf. And she has wasted no time. “Frankly,” she told the National Press Club, “I can’t help but roll my eyes when I hear that phrase [family] equated with a return to the sugar-coated, Ozzie-and-Harriet version of the family that some are trying to sell us today.”

Mrs. Feldt likes battling the odds. She was born in Texas in 1942, married at 15, and a mother of three by age 20. She eventually received a degree, with honors, in sociology and speech from the University of Texas, Permian Basin, and now is married with six grown children and eight grandchildren. During her tenure with PPEFA in Arizona,

she expanded the number of affiliate health centers there from three to 16, raised the regional operating budget from \$1.2 million to \$8.5 million, and initiated other new PPEFA programs.

She also demonstrated “a flare for the dramatic,” according to Mr. Scott, and a tendency “to demonize those who oppose her agenda.” Her press club speech demonstrated the problem. Mrs. Feldt quoted a dubious new study by Lake Research for PPEFA that claims 90 percent of Americans support access to family planning services. She then claimed that the “sensibilities” of some members of the recent 104th Congress had been drastically “skewed” by “the growing electoral influence of a tiny group of religious political extremists whose sensibilities are totally divorced from the mainstream; a small, but very vocal group whose votes are cynically bought and paid for at the expense of 90 percent of Americans—not to mention our public health.”

Accusations against those who crossed her were repeated, according to Mr. Scott, who told about Mrs. Feldt’s stance “in Payson, Ariz., where they were considering whether or not to have Planned Parenthood operate a clinic in the town.” One woman told a horror story about the way she had been treated inside a Planned Parenthood clinic and how it had traumatized her. “Gloria got up and just said these kind of things were out-and-out lies,” recalls Mr. Scott. “She just accused the woman, who was shocked, of being a liar. . . . She just has no qualms about accusing people of lying.”

In her National Press Club address, Mrs. Feldt outlined four priorities in her new administration: (1) increase access to family planning; (2) implement “realistic sex education policies,” including the fresh release of a new PPEFA video kit, Talking About Sex, for parents to use talking with children ages 10-14; (3) expand PPEFA’s Internet information system; (4) increase voter participation, including a million-voter registration drive. PPEFA already has 152 not-for-profit affiliates that operate 1,000 clinics which reach five million people yearly.

Mr. Scott says to look for Mrs. Feldt to go after yet more taxpayer funding for abortion and sex education of minors. “She is essentially going to put Planned Parenthood back in the forefront of getting as much taxpayer money as they can. . . . More than any leader Planned Parenthood has ever had, Gloria will spend time trying to convince the American public that they are ignorant and Planned Parenthood knows more than they do about raising kids right regarding the sexuality issue, and nobody should get in their way.” ☺