

## **he eye of the abortion storm - Dr. Edward - Press-Enterprise, The (Riverside, CA) - November 8, 1992 - page A01**

November 8, 1992 | Press-Enterprise, The (Riverside, CA) | Steve Pokin | Page A01

Dr. Edward Allred never intended to specialize in abortions.

"I would not want you to think I was a true believer," says Allred, owner and founder of Family Planning Associates Medical Group, the largest chain of abortion clinics in the state, if not the nation. The chain has 21 abortion clinics in California, including one each in Riverside and San Bernardino. He owns another dozen or so pregnancy testing sites, and two abortion clinics in Chicago.

In Allred's own eyes, he is simply a shrewd businessman who happened 25 years ago to start a medical practice just as abortion was made legal in California and as a better way of doing abortions became available. He worked hard to rise above his modest upbringing in Los Angeles, believed in God and served his country en route to becoming wealthy.

To abortion foes, however, Allred's accomplishments are no Horatio Alger story. They compare his success to the Holocaust and in anti-abortion literature place Allred's picture among those of gnarled, aborted fetuses.

Yet anti-abortionists who might have viewed him as evil incarnate can be taken aback when they meet him.

"Except for the fact that I disagree strongly with what he is doing, he is a likable guy, a good businessman," says Jack M. Schuler, a Los Angeles attorney who has sued Allred several times for medical malpractice.

The Rev. Al Howard, who runs a small church and maternity home in Long Beach, has protested at Allred's clinics for years. Several times the two have discussed abortion and Allred once accepted Howard's invitation to speak at his church.

"He always gave me the impression that he does listen," says the pastor. "He is very polite in his nature. He seems like a gentle man, which to me is amazing."

The complete Allred might also stun abortion supporters who, based on that one issue, would anoint him as a champion of women's causes. He is a political conservative, a Reagan/Bush supporter, despite their opposition to abortion. He believes that too many poor women have children to get a bigger welfare check. He found Anita Hill to be unbelievable. He contends that women should not be legally entitled to equal pay for equal work because it's a fact of life that they leave jobs to have babies.

He distances himself from organizations like the Federation of Feminist Women's Health Centers,

a national group based in Los Angeles. The federation's 20 centers, Allred maintains, are run primarily by lesbians too radical for his liking. -Interviews rare

Allred speaks his mind, when he chooses to speak.

Someone who has known Allred for 20 years, Jim McMahon, a Los Angeles physician who specializes in late abortions, says: "He is terribly honest, very straightforward."

It has been years since Allred consented to an in-depth interview. He does not want to be a high-profile, pro-choice spokesman in the abortion debate.

"If someone has trouble with abortion, that is something they have to sort out on their own," Allred says. "I have sorted it out on my own."

Allred reasons that a fertilized egg is not a human being just as a foundation is not a house, but only the beginning.

"I look upon abortion as a medical procedure. I do not look upon it in political terms," he says. Philosophically, he sees no difference among aborting an embryo developing in the uterus, aborting a doomed fetus developing in a fallopian tube and allowing a fertilized human egg cell to die in a plastic dish.

"I cannot quite conceive intellectually or spiritually or any way that you are talking about people's souls," he says.

At one time, Allred spoke occasionally at churches. But in 1985 he lost his enthusiasm for it. While waiting to be introduced at a Santa Monica church, he heard the pastor work the crowd into an anti-abortion frenzy. He left.

Allred says that, whenever he is in the public eye, he prompts a new round of protests at his clinics and his Long Beach home. And he sets off a wave of mail, some threatening, from the subset of abortion foes he calls "nitwits, psychos and people who hear voices."

A 16-person security force protects his clinics and his home, an expense Allred would rather not have but believes is necessary.

Allred views protesters as a nuisance. "I find it annoying to have patients go through that," he says. "They always ask us why we can't do something."

The worst personal harassment he recalls was several years ago: A man for a few months telephoned him at his Long Beach home in the middle of the night to tell him he was a "baby killer."  
-A man of two views

A Seventh-day Adventist who rarely drinks and does not smoke, Allred says that in some ways he feels greater affinity for peaceful, committed Christians who protest at his clinics than the "hard-core" pro-choice supporters who occasionally rally to counter-protest.

In fact, he'd rather not have abortion supporters at his clinics. Quite often, says Allred, they consist of women who exhibit "extreme behavior and extreme dress . . . It's kind of an embarrassment to the pro-choice field to have leaders . . . who are not middle-class, married or who do not have families."

Regardless of such views, what counts with feminists and pro-choice supporters is that Allred performs abortions despite harassment, says feminist attorney Gloria Allred of Los Angeles. The two are not related.

"We obviously do not agree on many other issues," she says, "but on this one key and very fundamental issue we do. There is no litmus test for people who do abortions. They do not have to be ideologically pure on other issues."

Allred believes that women should have freedom of choice, but that's not the main reason he supports abortion rights. He says he favors abortion because it is a logical remedy for an overpopulated planet.

"I don't believe abortion should be a primary means of population control," he says. "Unfortunately, for some individuals it might come down to that." -Population control

Allred's reported views on population control have long haunted him.

When Allred went before the Riverside County Board of Supervisors in 1990 to seek support for a horse-racing track he wants to build in Mira Loma, abortion foes used published remarks to charge that Allred is a racist.

Schuler, the Los Angeles attorney, sued Allred in connection with the deaths of two Hispanic women who died at Allred facilities following abortions in 1984. To bolster his argument that the women received sub-standard care because they were Hispanic, Schuler cited remarks he considers racist that were attributed to Allred in a newspaper story. Allred settled the lawsuits out of court for sums that neither he nor Schuler would reveal.

The controversy began when Allred was quoted in 1980 in the San Diego Union (now San Diego Union-Tribune) as saying: "Take the new influx of Hispanic immigrants. Their lack of respect for democracy and social order is frightening. I hope I can do something to stem that tide; I'd set up a clinic in Mexico for free if I could. Maybe one in Calexico would help. The survival of our society could be at stake."

In the same story, he was quoted as saying: "When a sullen black woman of 17 or 18 can decide to have a baby and get welfare and food stamps and become a burden to us all, it's time to stop. In parts of South Los Angeles having babies for welfare is the only industry the people have."

Although he never asked for a retraction, Allred contends that he was misquoted and that the "racist" label is undeserved.

His main point, regarding Hispanic women, was that overpopulation leads to poverty, and it is hard for democracy to flourish when people are poor, he says.

But the published remarks about the black woman accurately reflect his views, Allred says. He explains that he used a black woman as an example because when he first started his practice 90 percent of his female patients were black. However, his comments were intended to apply to poor women regardless of color.

"Unwanted pregnancies and unwanted additions to families are very destructive to social policy," he says. "Someone who has seven kids and is a single parent - if anyone thinks that is a way to raise a family, they can think that. I don't."

Allred says he would abolish the Aid to Families with Dependent Children welfare program. But he has no problem with the fact Medi-Cal pays for one-third of the abortions done at his clinics, including half of those at the Riverside clinic. Government should pay for poor women's abortions, he says, because population control is such an important social issue. -How many abortions?

Although Allred said in the 1980 San Diego Union article that he had personally performed 250,000 abortions since 1968, he declines to give an updated figure. "Why give them more ammunition?" he asks, referring to abortion foes.

It's been five years since he performed abortions full-time. "When we are short of people, I do like to do it," he says.

Tan and heavy, Allred looks the part of the successful businessman, someone who can choose when to work and when to golf, a longtime passion.

He has homes in Long Beach, Fresno, New Mexico, Hawaii, a horse ranch in Atascadero, a 6,500-acre cattle ranch in Nevada, and in the last year bought what he calls a "little house" of 3,900 square feet in the posh new Bighorn Country Club in the foothills overlooking Palm Desert.

He says he is on good terms with his wife of 32 years, even though they have not lived together in more than five years and he has dated other women. They see no reason to get divorced, he says.

Allred has no children - a fact anti-abortionists are quick to cite as a reason why he can - in their words - "kill babies."

Allred says he and his wife never had a strong desire for children and that in his 20s and 30s he was too busy going to medical school and working to consider it. Another factor was his concern for overpopulation.

His "babies," as he calls them, are the 90 or so young horses he names every year that are foaled on his 350-acre horse ranch, where he has some 400 quarterhorses, thoroughbreds, appaloosas and Arabians.

He owns half of Los Alamitos Race Course and co-owns a race track in Ruidoso, N.M.

His plans to build a race track and equestrian center in Mira Loma are still alive, he says, but have been scaled back because of the poor economy and uncertainty about the impact of Indian-

controlled gambling. In addition, he now wants California law changed so he could offer satellite wagering at the site indefinitely before live racing begins. Under current law, live racing must begin after two years. -Childhood memories

Allred's interest in horse racing dates to age 5 and fond memories of family trips to Santa Anita race track. Other childhood memories are not so fond.

Allred's natural father died of tuberculosis when Allred was 2. According to Allred, his late stepfather's alcoholism caused marital and financial problems that at times forced him to live with his maternal grandmother and neighbors.

"I was raised with bill collectors at my door," he says. "I was determined that I would not let that happen to me."

His mother and stepfather divorced when he was 14 or 15. Soon after, a prominent physician at Glendale Adventist Hospital took an interest in the family. Allred will not name the physician, despite the fact that the man is dead. He says he does not want his notoriety to touch surviving family members.

With the doctor's financial help, Allred transferred from public high school to Glendale Union Academy, a Seventh-day Adventist school. Allred regards this as the major turning point in his life.

Allred became a Seventh-day Adventist and went on to affiliated schools - La Sierra University in Riverside, then called La Sierra College, where he graduated in 1959, and Loma Linda University School of Medicine, where he earned a medical degree in 1964.

Academy classmate Verne Tjarks, legal counsel for Allred's abortion clinics for 12 years, says many Glendale Union students had fathers who were doctors, while Allred was from "the other side of the tracks." Allred was one of the few students who had to work after school.

"He was somebody that you felt was going to go some place," said Tjarks.

Allred caused a stir at La Sierra University when he wrote an article in the student newspaper opposing passage of a state right-to-work law that would have hurt unions. Although the article would have been a minor offense today, Allred says, in the 1950s the campus was far more conservative.

"I was a Stevenson Democrat in those days . . . probably the only one on campus," he says, recalling that the incident garnered him the Cold War moniker "Pinky."

Following his medical residency, he spent 13 months as a combat medic in Vietnam. His military experience, which provided a first-hand view of the bureaucracy and inefficiency of government, had the biggest impact in changing his political views. "I just don't think government does anything well," Allred says. -Beginning in 1967

Allred started his general practice in 1967 in a small hospital near the Watts section of Los Angeles, never intending to specialize in abortions.

"When I started out doing it, it was more of an interesting sidelight to my practice," he says.

State law changed in 1967 with passage of the Therapeutic Abortion Act, giving California the nation's most liberal abortion law. It allowed abortions to be performed in hospitals in cases in which the pregnancy would "greatly impair the physical or mental health" of the woman.

Allred says he was the first doctor to interpret the law as allowing the doctor - and not just a psychologist or psychiatrist - to determine there was a mental health need. This sped up the process and cut the cost, he says.

Kenneth Wright, then a doctor at Hollywood Presbyterian Hospital, now Queen of Angels Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center, says he learned through the abortion "grapevine" that Allred was doing abortions and went to him because his hospital had limited the number of abortions he could do to five a week.

Wright, who now does abortions at Allred's clinics in Fresno, Bakersfield and Modesto, introduced Allred to the new procedure of suction curettage, in which a machine sucks out the contents of the uterus. The old method was to use a curet, a metal instrument shaped like a spoon, to scrape out the uterus.

Allred says he was immediately interested in mastering the technique because it was new and few doctors knew how to do it. He also quickly realized that suction curettage meant that a skilled doctor could do uncomplicated early abortions in three or four minutes instead of 20, and do them more safely than the old way, he says.

Since abortion was legal in California years before the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 Roe vs. Wade decision established a woman's right to abortion nationwide, out-of-state women flocked to his hospital for abortions.

Although the Roe decision later cost him much of this out-of-state business, it opened abortion to clinic settings and Allred capitalized.

He opened clinics in Santa Ana, San Diego and Fresno. His Riverside clinic opened in 1975. As business boomed, Allred bought two planes and he and Wright worked marathon hours performing abortions at different clinics.

Over the years, Allred says, he has continually made his operation more efficient so that the cost has only risen from \$185 twenty years ago to \$305 for the most typical abortion done at his clinics - an uncomplicated first trimester abortion with general anesthesia. His clinics differ from most in the use of general anesthesia instead of local anesthesia. Allred says that's a medical decision and that he employs additional staff members to provide the service.

Allred has bought out and hired almost all his major competitors, he says.

McMahon, the doctor who has known Allred for 20 years, calls Allred a "genius caught in a bad century" who has streamlined and marketed abortion services the way Ray Kroc innovated the

marketing and preparation of hamburgers.

Allred prefers to say he provides an "affordable niche" for abortions. "Nobody - given a choice - would like to have his medical operation compared to a hamburger stand."

#### CITATION (AGLC STYLE)

Steve Pokin, The Press-Enterprise, 'At the eye of the abortion storm Dr. Edward Allred has made a fortune in abortions. Yet he is a political conservative who questions the feminist movement and feels more in sympathy with those who oppose his work.', *Press-Enterprise, The* (online), 8 Nov 1992 A01 <<https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AWNB&docref=news/0EAF83F94F0679E1>>

Copyright (c) 1992, 2000 The Press-Enterprise Co.