

Late-Term Acquitted

Abortionist

✖ **March 27, 2009** – Kansas abortionist George Tiller was found not guilty Friday of 19 misdemeanor charges of performing illegal late-term abortions.

The jury of six men and six women took less than an hour to deliberate the case that had been closely watched by both abortion supporters and opponents. But moments after the verdict was announced the state's medical board announced it was investigating similar allegations against the Wichita-based physician, according to the Associated Press (AP).

One of only a few doctors nationwide who perform late-term abortions, Tiller, 67, was accused of violating a Kansas law requiring that women seeking to abort babies that could survive outside the womb be given a second opinion by a doctor with no legal or financial ties to a physician who performs late-term abortions.

The prosecution argued that Dr. Ann Kristen Neuhaus, who referred 19 women to Tiller in 2003, was essentially an employee of his because they said patients had to set up appointments with her through Tiller's office, the AP said.

Tiller testified that his attorneys and Larry Buening, who was then executive director of the Board of Healing Arts, advised him to use Neuhaus, the AP said. He also said Neuhaus disagreed with him in about five cases each year, and in those situations abortions were not performed.

The pro-life organization Operation Rescue had staged prayer vigils outside Tiller's clinic and was present during the trial this week. President Troy Newman said justice had been denied Friday in the case.

"While disappointed in the verdict, we at Operation Rescue are not deterred in our commitment to one day bring Tiller to justice," Newman said in a statement. "The 19 charges that Tiller faces were only a small fraction of the illegal activity that we believe and have documented that occurs at Tiller's Wichita abortion clinic. On behalf of the pre-born children wrongly killed by Tiller and his associates, we vow to press on until Tiller is finally held accountable to the law and his late-term abortion mill is permanently closed."

Tiller, who faced a maximum penalty of a year in jail and a \$2,500 for each conviction, said the charges were politically motivated. The attorney general who first began the criminal investigation into Tiller's clinic four years ago was pro-life, but his successors have both been abortion advocates, the AP reported.

Soon after Tiller's acquittal was announced, the state's Board of Healing Arts issued public a complaint against Tiller on similar allegations. The AP said the board could revoke, suspend or limit Tiller's medical license, or issue a fine.

Tiller has been a target of pro-life groups for decades. In 1985 his clinic was bombed, and in 1993 he was shot in each arm-incidents that pro-life advocates condemned.

Kansas law prohibits abortions after the child is able to survive outside the womb unless the mother's life is in danger or the pregnancy will result in a "substantial and irreversible impairment of a major bodily function." Some have interpreted that to include mental health.

Tiller estimated that he performed 250 to 300 late-term abortions in 2003, which cost an average of \$6,000 each, the AP said.