

Compelling Story of Mom Who Refused to Abort Conjoined Twins Wins Journalism Award

Rachel Aldrich's compelling story of a couple who refused to abort conjoined twins during a high-risk pregnancy won the \$5,000 first-place prize in Christian Life Missions' inaugural presentation of the Walker Journalism Award.

The Walker Journalism Award honors the life and legacy of Christian journalism pioneer Robert Walker and encourages students to use the media to articulate the Christian message. Walker was founder both of *Christian Life* magazine and Christian Life Missions, sponsor of the prize.

The second-place \$2,500 scholarship was awarded to Derek Kim of Michigan State for an editorial on the cultural wars in the student newspaper *The State News*. His piece criticized a state court's ruling that struck down a Michigan ban on same-sex marriage.

Third place went to Oral Roberts University student McKensie Garber for a feature in the student paper *The Oracle* about a couple who married knowing the groom was dying of cancer. Garber's prize is \$1,500.

The award will be an annual undertaking of the nonprofit—which is affiliated with Charisma Media, publisher of *Charisma* and other magazines plus a large library of Christian books in both English and Spanish—said Steve Strang, president of Christian Life Missions and founder and CEO of Charisma Media.

Aldrich, a rising senior at Patrick Henry College in Virginia, wrote in *WORLD* magazine how Kristi and Dave Eskelund of North Carolina chose life for their unborn daughters in 2001 despite the pregnancy's carrying what doctors called “off-the-chart

risk.” Following their birth, surgery to separate the conjoined twins was successful. However, the weaker child, Anneka Mercy, died at the age of six months. The other girl, Lydia Joy, was still thriving in excellent health at age 12.

In his op-ed column, Kim wrote that government had no business interfering in the covenant relationship of marriage, which predates formation of the United States or any other civil government for that matter. “So when a judge says this violates the equal protection of the law, he or she is putting him or herself in the place of God—he is perverting the constitution,” Kim wrote. That is because law is based on morality, and all morality is based on theology, he argued.

During the summer break after Jordan Lewis and Cady Kendall, both juniors at Oral Roberts, began dating in 2011, Lewis was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer of the sinus, according to Garber’s account. He had surgery, then endured radiation and chemotherapy, which put the cancer into remission for 18 months. However, in May 2013, it came back in his head and metastasized to both lungs. That was when Cady suggested they get married right away. Their happy union lasted nine months.

Jordan went home to be with the Lord on March 20. Five days later, in an invitation to friends to celebrate his life, Cady wrote this: “I didn’t lose my husband to cancer. I watched him choose his victory to be with Jesus after fighting with the purest bravery.”

Walker was the first publisher to receive the prestigious Magazine Publishers Award from the Evangelical Christian Publisher Association in 1994. He passed away on March 1, 2008, but leaves an eternal legacy for current and future generations called to Christian journalism.

Walker established the Robert Walker Scholarship Fund to help young Christians whom God has called into Christian journalism with their college education. This year’s award marks the

transition of the scholarship to a writing competition. Strang said the scholarship fund “helps young people who are devoting their lives to proclaiming the Gospel through the media, which is the legacy that Robert Walker leaves.”