

Editorial

'Death, Where Is Thy Sting?'

Just as Illinois Governor Ryan made his best effort to rid this nation of the painful scourge of capital punishment, a leading associate and close friend of Lyndon and Helga LaRouche, who had made it her "personal mission" to free America of the death penalty, passed away. Marianna Wertz died early on Jan. 15, Martin Luther King's birthday, at 54, having fought for many years against cancer and effects of its treatment. Her life, marked both by great human compassion, and a bold determination to make a difference, was full of such self-chosen missions; and in nearly all, she achieved such victories—never final, but always joyful, to her very last hours. Her work since 1989, known to all our readers, of investigating and writing about every case, every development which could hasten the final discrediting of capital punishment, was only one of those missions, chosen by her, but inspired by the long friendship with the LaRouches which washer treasured blessing.

Mrs. Wertz also enjoyed a special friendship of many years with Mrs. Amelia Boynton Robinson of Selma, Alabama, the civil rights heroine whose autobiography, *Bridge Across Jordan*, she edited, and whose vast international work for the Schiller Institute she often coordinated. "Marianna was like a daughter to me, and a friend, and the best editor you could ever imagine," said Mrs. Boynton Robinson. "She was a combination of everything good, and she did it all so well." At Selma's dedication of the National Voting Rights Museum in 2002, and honoring of the lifelong struggle of Mrs. Boynton Robinson and her late husband S.W. Boynton, she asked that the concluding presentation focussing on her continuing work around the world today, be given by Mrs. Wertz.

As Vice-President of the Schiller Institute, Marianna Wertz's work included the preparation, together with her husband of 27 years, William Wertz, of the three-volume work *Friedrich Schiller: Poet of Freedom*, by which the Institute uniquely put Schiller's great dramas, poetry, and essays together into circulation in English, some for the first time. She became a passionate translator of Schiller's poetry into English; her translation of some of his most beautiful philosophical poems, including the great *The Artists*, is awaiting publication in a fourth volume of *Poet of Freedom* which she had prepared.

Her greatest satisfaction lay in challenging herself to do what she saw was necessary, but difficult; her happiness came from changing, inspiring, and organizing others to do more, and to be happier. She formed and conducted the Schiller Institute's West Coast chorus in the early 1980s, for example, never having attempted such work before. In her last year of life, despite very poor health, she volunteered to take up again the physi-

cally arduous but rewarding work of daily organizing, fundraising and recruitment to the growing LaRouche movement, inspiring those she worked with.

Because of her long-deteriorating health, Marianna Wertz's leadership in association with Lyndon and Helga LaRouche was "quiet, but very effective." She counted herself extraordinarily blessed: by her life—at 30, after first beating cancer, she said that 50 years on Earth would be great luck for her; by her very loving marriage; by the friendship and inspiration of Lyndon and Helga LaRouche. She used her talents well; and just before her last heart surgery, said that if she were now to die, she had lived a most wonderful life. And so her death was "swallowed up in victory."



Marianna Wertz, 1948-2003