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## **Susan Hill at the Supreme Court: Reproductive Rights Advocacy in the Deep South Remembered**



This thesis is an examination of the monumental strength of abortion clinic owners in the post-*Roe v. Wade* era. In particular, I have chosen to focus on the life and work of Susan Hill, a native of Durham, N.C., and lifelong advocate for reproductive freedom. In 1986, Hill was approached by Ellie Smeal of the National Organization for Women to join a burgeoning lawsuit against the growing intrusion of anti-choice protestors at clinics nationwide. Hill signed on as a key plaintiff and witness for the case, which would ultimately find itself before the Supreme Court. The case, filed as *NOW vs. Scheidler*, argued under the RICO (Racketeer-Influenced Corrupt Organizations) Act with Hill as a key plaintiff, marked a sharp departure from previously legal strategies employed by reproductive rights organizations. I argue Hill's inclusion as a plaintiff determined the course of the case overall: her insight as a clinic owner drove the argument from which NOW successfully charged Joseph Scheidler and associates with racketeering in 1998.