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PATHBREAKING STUDY FINDS ADULTS CONCEIVED THROUGH SPERM DONATION SUFFER SUBSTANTIAL HARM

First-ever representative, comparative study of adults conceived via sperm donation reveals they struggle with the implications of their conception; report aims to launch international debate on the ethics, meaning, and practice of donor conception

New York, NY—May 31, 2010— The Commission on Parenthood's Future today released internationally the groundbreaking report *My Daddy's Name is Donor: A New Study of Young Adults Conceived Through Sperm Donation*, co-investigated by Elizabeth Marquardt, Norval D. Glenn, and Karen Clark. The report reveals stunning findings about the lives of adult offspring of sperm donation, one of the most common reproductive technologies and one that has been practiced widely in the U.S. and around the world for decades.

"Many people think that because these young people resulted from wanted pregnancies, how they were conceived doesn't matter to them," says co-investigator Elizabeth Marquardt. Co-investigator Karen Clark adds, "But this study reveals that when they are adults, sperm donor offspring can struggle with serious losses from being purposefully denied knowledge of, or a relationship with, their sperm donor biological fathers."

In the U.S. alone an estimated 30,000-60,000 children are born each year through sperm donation, yet no entity is required to report on these vital statistics. Until now, no reliable evidence has been available on the experiences of young adults who were conceived in this way. This study is the first-ever representative, comparative attempt to learn about the identity, kinship, well-being, and social justice experiences of these adults.

The study reveals that, on average, young adults conceived through sperm donation are hurting more, are more confused, and feel more isolated from their families. They fare worse than their peers raised by biological parents on important outcomes such as depression, delinquency, and substance abuse. Moreover, the study found that:

- Two-thirds agree, "My sperm donor is half of who I am;"
- About half are disturbed that money was involved in their conception;
- More than half say that when they see someone who resembles them they wonder if they are related;
- Nearly half say they have feared being attracted to or having sexual relations with someone to whom they are unknowingly related;

- Two-thirds affirm the right of donor offspring to know the truth about their origins; and

- About half of donor offspring have concerns about or serious objections to donor conception *itself*, even when parents tell their children the truth.

The report concludes with nineteen recommendations addressed to leaders in the law and health policy and practice; media and popular culture; parents and would-be parents; and civic, social, and religious leaders in the U.S. and around the world. The report aims to launch a national and international debate on the ethics, meaning, and practice of donor conception – starting now.

THE SURVEY was fielded by the research firm Abt SRBI of New York City through a web-based panel that includes more than a million households across the United States, assembling a representative sample of 485 adults between the ages of 18 and 45 years old who said their mother used a sperm donor to conceive them, as well as comparison groups of 562 young adults who were adopted as infants and 563 young adults who were raised by their biological parents. The 140 page report, with fifteen major findings and a full summary of the data, is available for free download on June 3, 2010 at www.familyscholars.org.

CO-INVESTIGATORS Elizabeth Marquardt of the Institute for American Values in New York City and **Norval Glenn** of the University of Texas at Austin have gained substantial, national media attention for their previous studies on the hook up culture on college campuses (2001) and the inner lives of children of divorce (2005). For this study they are joined by researcher **Karen Clark** who found out at age 18, after her dad had passed away, that she had been conceived through anonymous sperm donation in 1966. Their bios and photographs are available at www.familyscholars.org.

THE COMMISSION ON PARENTHOOD'S FUTURE is an independent, nonpartisan group of scholars and leaders who have come together to investigate the status of parenthood as a legal, ethical, social, and scientific category in contemporary societies and to make recommendations for the future. Commission members convene scholarly conferences, produce books, reports, and public statements, write for popular and scholarly publications, and engage in public speaking. A list of the members may be found at www.familyscholars.org.

THE INSTITUTE FOR AMERICAN VALUES, founded in 1988, is a private, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization devoted to research, publication and public education on issues of civil society. By providing forums for scholarly inquiry and debate, the Institute seeks to bring fresh knowledge to bear on the challenges facing civil society. Through its publications and other educational activities, the Institute seeks to bridge the gap between scholarship and policy making, bringing new information to the attention of policy makers in the government, opinion makers in the media and decision makers in the private sector. For more information visit www.americanvalues.org.

For questions or to schedule an interview
with Elizabeth Marquardt or Karen Clark, please call
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