

Drew DeCoursey, author of book on defense of life, dies at 74

CEDAR KNOLLS, N.J. – A funeral Mass was celebrated Jan. 7 at Notre Dame of Mount Carmel Church in Cedar Knolls for Andrew “Drew” DeCoursey, who died Jan. 2. He was 74 and had been fighting prostate cancer since 1989.

DeCoursey was an author, essayist, cartoonist and social activist whose work appeared in national, local and religious publications, including The Beacon, diocesan newspaper in Paterson.

His book, “Lifting the Veil of Choice,” is a collection of essays on the defense of human life. The foreword was written by Blessed Mother Teresa, founder of the Missionaries of Charity. For more than two decades, he served with the Missionaries of Charity at a soup kitchen and women’s shelter in Newark and at the Gift of Love Hospice for AIDS patients in New York’s Greenwich Village.

He was honored by the Diocese of Paterson’s Justice and Peace Commission as the recipient of its first Peace Award in 1989 for his pro-life, parish, charitable and peace activities as someone who followed the mandate of Pope Paul VI: “If you want peace, work for justice.”

He was nominated for the award by Eileen Egan, a founder of Pax Christi USA and staff member of Catholic Relief Services, who said, “I can think of no worthier recipient. In talks and letters, he has pursued deeply the implications of the Gospel peace message. He has put his beliefs into action in works of mercy. This award would remind people of Christian living in their midst.”

DeCoursey is survived by his wife of 45 years, the former Margaret Mary Lynch; three children; and five grandchildren.