

# PRO-LIFE ACTION LEAGUE

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## Pro-Life Activist Scheidler Beats NOW in Supreme Court

CHICAGO, Feb. 28—“Naturally I am gratified to be vindicated once again by the United States Supreme Court,” said Joseph M. Scheidler, National Director of the Chicago-based Pro-Life Action League, and Petitioner in the *NOW v. Scheidler* RICO case that the Court ruled on today.

“I am mystified that I had to go to the trouble and expense of appearing before the Supreme Court three times,” said Scheidler. “The Court was right when they ruled for us 8-1 in 2003, but the National Organization for Women refused to acknowledge defeat. They convinced the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals to keep the case alive, in spite of the Supreme Court’s clear mandate to end it.”

*NOW v. Scheidler* was filed in 1986. It underwent innumerable revisions of the Complaint, additions and subtractions of Defendants and Plaintiffs, and went from an anti-trust charge to RICO (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) before going to trial in 1998. NOW’s lawyers relied on perjured testimony and unsubstantiated claims against unnamed individuals to win a “guilty” verdict from the jury in a seven-week trial in March and April 1998.

A three-judge panel of the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals, headed by Judge Diane Wood, who claimed an affiliation with Chicago NOW and Planned Parenthood throughout the duration of the Scheidler case, affirmed the District Court’s ruling. Following the 8-1 Supreme Court ruling in favor of Scheidler, the Seventh Circuit declined to do what the Supreme Court mandated: vacate the injunction and reverse the Judgment. Instead the Seventh Circuit sent the case to the District Court.

“I saw no benefit in going back to the District Court here in Chicago,” said Scheidler, “because I have no confidence in the impartiality of the lower Courts. The Supreme Court seems to take the First Amendment more seriously than the Circuits do.”

Scheidler’s attorney Thomas Brejcha said, “This unanimous ruling is not just a victory for pro-life activists, but for anyone who chooses to exercise his First Amendment rights to effect social change.” Brejcha is chief counsel of the Chicago-based Thomas More Society Pro-Life Law Center and has led Scheidler’s battle with NOW since its inception in 1986. Over seventy organizations and individuals representing movements for social change signed onto amicus briefs in the Scheidler appeal.

The Pro-Life Action League is the nation’s largest direct action pro-life organization. For further information please visit [www.prolifeaction.org](http://www.prolifeaction.org).