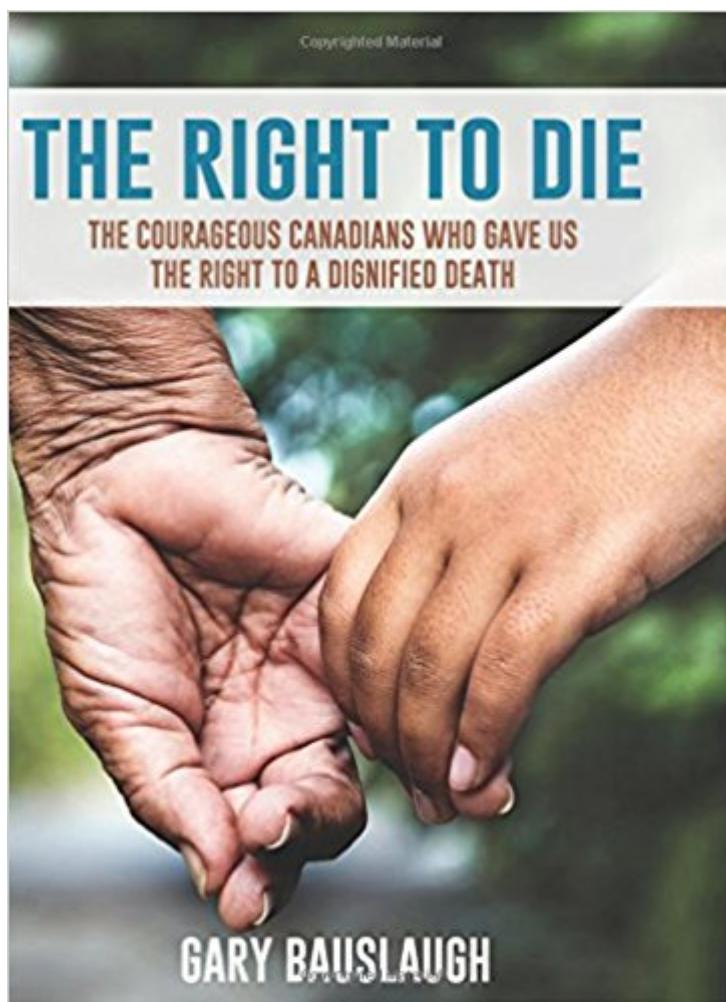


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# The Right To Die: The Courageous Canadians Who Gave Us The Right To A Dignified Death



## **Synopsis**

"Who owns my life?" Sue Rodriguez was dying of a form of ALS (or Lou Gehrig's disease) when she asked this question of the Supreme Court of Canada in 1993. She was fighting for the right to a physician-assisted death before she became fully paralyzed. At the time, assisted suicide could result in jail time for the participating physician. In a narrow decision, Rodriguez lost her case. She died in 1994. In a historic reversal, in 2015 the Supreme Court of Canada changed its mind. The court ruled that Canadians suffering unbearably from illness or disease do not have a duty to live. The landmark, unanimous decision was the culmination of two decades during which public opinion came to favour assisted suicide. The shift was the result of the efforts of courageous Canadians who asked for the right to a dignified death. In this book, Gary Bauslaugh tells their stories. Among those whose stories are told are: Sue Rodriguez, whose experience led to a split decision by the Supreme Court of Canada to retain laws against assisted suicide; Robert Latimer, convicted of second-degree murder for ending the life of his daughter who lived with debilitating cerebral palsy; John Hofsess and Evelyn Martens, who spent years giving practical assistance to those seeking help in dying; Donald Low, a renowned doctor who battled Toronto's SARS outbreak, yet was denied control over his end-of-life when diagnosed with a brain tumour; Kay Carter and Gloria Taylor, the Vancouver women whose end-of-life struggles were at the heart of the 2015 Supreme Court case.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"On the whole this is an extremely strong book. Bauslaugh's research is thorough, extending to

attending some of the key trials and interviewing many of the principals. And his ability to defly render complex policy and legal matters intelligible to the lay reader is commendable. Similarly, his sheer storytelling ability is admirable: somehow he was even able to create suspense in his account of the pivotal 2014 Supreme Court hearing even though the outcome is already well known. We will all lose people we love, and we all will die. This book ably provides a much-needed chronicle of how we arrived at this new era of end-of-life care in Canada. It celebrates the fact that when it comes to the ultimate question of timeliness? when we shuffle off this mortal coil? we will now have a measure of compassionate choice." (Kelley Tish Baker, The Monitor, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives 2016-07-01)"Who has the right to die? In his new book *The Right to Die*, author Gary Bauslaugh examines the stories and experiences of those individuals who want to end their life or have given this practical end-of-life assistance. These stories now come in the wake of Canada's new controversial assisted dying legislation, which became law in June, that restricts who qualifies for doctor-assisted death to only those "near death."" (rabble.ca 2016-08-25)

GARY BAUSLAUGH is the author of *The Secret Power of Juries* and *Robert Latimer: A Story of Justice and Mercy*. His writing has appeared in many publications and he has served as the president of the Humanist Association of Canada and editor of *Humanist Perspectives*. Gary, who holds a PhD in chemistry from McGill University, was a teacher and administrator in Canadian colleges and universities for many years. He lives in Victoria, B.C.

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