When Does Human Life Begin?

life [lait] - n, the state or quality that distinguishes living beings or organisms from dead ones and from inorganic matter, characterized chiefly by metabolism, growth, and the ability to reproduce and respond to stimuli (World English Dictionary)

human [hju:men] - adj. of, characterizing, or relating to man and mankind (World English Dictionary)

Quotes from respected embryology textbooks and scientists

“[F]ertilization ... is a critical landmark because, under ordinary circumstances, a new, genetically distinct human organism is formed when the chromosomes of the male and female pronuclei blend in the oocyte.” (Ronan O’Rahilly and Fabiola Muller, Human Embryology & Teratology, 3rd ed., New York: Wiley-Liss, 2001, p. 8)

“The zygote ... represents the beginning of a new life.” (J.P. Greenhill and E.A. Friedman, Biological Principles and Modern Practice of Obstetrics, Philadelphia: W.B. Sanders, 1974, p. 17)

“[T]he penetration of the ovum by a spermatozoan and resultant mingling of the nuclear material ... constitutes the culmination of the process of fertilization and marks the initiation of the life of a new individual.” (Keith L. Moore and T.V.N. Persaud, The Developing Human: Clinically Oriented Embryology, 7th ed., Phila.: Saunders, 2003, pp. 2,16)

“[T]he beginning of a single human life is from a biological point of view a simple and straightforward matter—the beginning is conception.” (Dr. Watson A. Bowes, University of Colorado Medical School)

Testimony before a US Senate subcommittee (Subcommittee on Separation of Powers to Senate Judiciary Committee S-158, Report, 97th Congress, 1st Session, 1981)

“It is incorrect to say that biological data cannot be decisive...It is scientifically correct to say that an individual human life begins at conception.” (Professor Micheline Matthews-Roth, Harvard University Medical School)

“I have learned from my earliest medical education that human life begins at the time of conception.” (Dr. Alfred M. Bongioanni, Prof. Pediatrics and Obstetrics, U of Pennsylvania)

“We tell her exactly like it is … when they abort, they’ll be aborting a small baby.” (Dr. Arthur Morris, Jr., Abortionist, as reported in the Asheville Citizen-Times, April 4, 1976)

Summary: If you want to argue that life doesn’t begin at fertilization, your argument is not with us; your argument is with science textbooks and pro-choice advocates.