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# Lawsuit in Silkwood nuclear safety case continues against employer after 5 years

United Press International  
OKLAHOMA CITY — Karen Silkwood worked long and hard to correct grave safety problems she said existed at the Kerr-McGee nuclear plant — problems that were

far more publicized after she died than before.

The 28-year-old woman was killed in a traffic accident in 1974 reportedly while on her way to meet with a newspaper reporter and a union representative about alleged unsafe working conditions at the nuclear plant where she worked.

Since her untimely death, her family and foes of the nuclear industry have united behind an \$11.5 million lawsuit against her employer, Kerr-McGee Nuclear Corp.

The suit alleges the company's negligence in providing a safe working atmosphere for its workers ended in Silkwood's contamination with radioactive plutonium.

Tests on Silkwood shortly before her death showed she had been con-

taminated with the cancer-causing substance, which workers handled on a daily basis at the Kerr-McGee plant.

The suit's allegations of unsafe working conditions have been supported for almost two weeks in testimony in the federal court hearing of the case.

Former workers have described the Kerr-McGee facility, located near Oklahoma City, as a "pigpen" and a place that was in "deplorable condition."

Witnesses have testified they saw pieces of radioactive uranium lying around on the floor and being used as paperweights. One former employee even testified he saw workers playfully throw chunks of uranium at each other.

Scientist Dr. Karl Morgan, a nuclear advocate and pioneer in the field of health safety at nuclear facilities, described the Kerr-McGee plant as one of the worst operations he'd ever studied.

"There was a wanton disregard for health and safety," he said of the Kerr-McGee operation. "There seemed to be a burning desire to put production first and safety second."

A former health technician for several years at the plant testified he finally quit his job because contamination was "everywhere" and he could not keep up with all the exposure cases.

Perhaps the most sensational testimony in the trial, expected to last at least four more weeks, came from

Morgan.

The internationally known researcher blamed a security breach that "leaked like a sieve" for the appearance of 40 pounds of plutonium from the Kerr-McGee plant.

Morgan said the amount of plutonium was enough to make several nuclear weapons capable of imperiling the human race.

Kerr-McGee has admitted to the Atomic Energy Commission it cannot account for whereabouts of the 40 pounds of plutonium. They contend, however, the missing substance is lodged in the pipe system at the plant, closed in 1975.

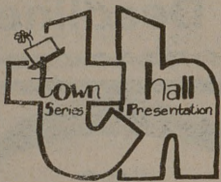
The corporation's explanation challenged in testimony by employee James Smith, who testified the court his crews flushed out pipes for weeks and could find only a small amount of plutonium. Kerr-McGee attorneys spent most of their cross-examination efforts attempting to discredit the testimony.

In other testimony, two employees told the court they attended federally required safety training classes while working at Kerr-McGee. The workers testified no one ever told them they could get cancer from too much exposure to radiation.

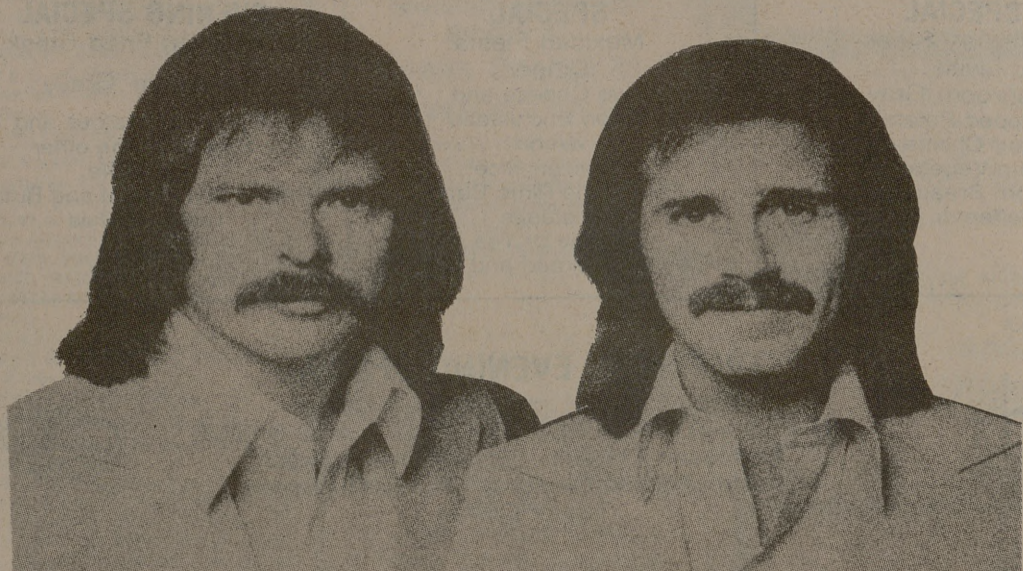
Kerr-McGee lawyers attempted to cast doubt on their testimony by submitting health safety meeting minutes signed by the employees. But the former employees testified their names had been forged on the attendance sheet.

## Attention All Students

MSC Town Hall is accepting applications for new members March 19-23. Applications are due no later than March 23 in rm. 216 MSC. Interviews will be held March 26-30.



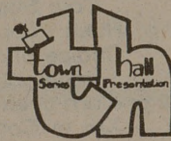
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## Debaters win honor at SWTS

The Texas A&M University Debate Team has won third place in the annual Southwest Texas University tournament in San Marcos.

Lydia Johnson, Lufkin, and Patricia Smith, Houston, took place in duo-dramatic interpretation. Johnson also won third place in dramatic interpretation with a play from the play "Dark of the Moon."

Pam Putman, Houston, placed the top three in extemporaneous speaking. Norma Ocha, Edinburg, advanced to the finals in prose interpretation.

Kathy Hauschild of Victoria, Smith and Johnson advanced to semifinals in prose interpretation and poetry interpretation and extemporaneous speaking.

The debate team of Mike Smith, Victoria, and Ocha broke into quarterfinals before losing to Louisiana State University in a two-to-one decision.

# WE NEED YOU!

The MSC Council and Directorate has memberships open in most of its committees throughout the year. Presently, the following committees are accepting applications for OFFICER positions:

- MSC Aggie Cinema
- MSC Arts
- MSC Black Awareness Committee
- MSC Camera
- MSC Free University
- MSC Great Issues
- MSC Hospitality
- MSC Opera and Performing Arts Society
- MSC Outdoor Recreation Committee
- MSC Radio
- MSC Recreation
- MSC Student Conference on National Affairs
- MSC Travel
- MSC Town Hall
- MSC Videotape

Apply Room 216 MSC

Deadline: Wednesday, March 21, 1979

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## IT'S HERE!

THE

# M.S.C. ALL-UNIVERSITY VARIETY SHOW

PERFORMANCE - **MARCH 23, 1979**  
**RUDDER AUD.**  
**8:00 PM**

TICKETS - STUDENTS - **\$ 1.00**  
NON-STUD. - **\$ 1.50**

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