

the nation

# \$5,000 was enough for Silkwoods

**United Press International**  
**OKLAHOMA CITY** — The family of contaminated nuclear worker Karen Silkwood would have been satisfied with a \$5,000 out-of-court settlement from Kerr-McGee Corp., but the energy company refused to pay the amount, an attorney said Monday.

Silkwood lawyer Jim Ikard said all the family wanted after Ms. Silkwood's death in 1974 "was to be reimbursed for Karen's property."

Kerr-McGee removed most of Ms. Silkwood's belongings from her apartment when they determined

both she and her residence had been contaminated with plutonium.

The Silkwood family last month won \$10.5 million from Kerr-McGee for the contamination. The damage amount was set by a federal jury after a lengthy court battle.

"The whole thing could have ended in January 1975 if they (Kerr-McGee) had paid the \$5,000," Ikard said. "They could have got out of it cheap."

Ms. Silkwood, an employee at Kerr-McGee's plutonium plant north of Oklahoma City, died in a car accident November 1974,

shortly after her contamination. Her survivors sued Kerr-McGee for \$71.5 million for the contamination, but a federal jury awarded them \$1.505 million for her injuries, mental anguish and the confiscated property. The jurors assessed Kerr-McGee \$10 million punitive damages for the corporation's negligence.

Ms. Silkwood's father Bill Silkwood said he asked Kerr-McGee for \$5,000, but the corporation sent him a check for \$1,500.

"It was pitiful," said Silkwood, a Nederland, Texas, resident. "In my

opinion Kerr-McGee was arrogant." Silkwood said his attorneys advised him to return the check.

He did so, and in November 1976 he filed suit against Kerr-McGee seeking \$160,000. The original suit sought \$15,000 for her contamination. The remainder of the damage prayer was for two civil rights counts, which were dismissed by a federal judge last fall.

The two counts, which are on appeal at the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver, allege Kerr-McGee, the FBI and several other named defendants conspired to de-

prive Ms. Silkwood of her civil rights.

The damage prayer for the contamination count was amended several times before the case went to the jury in the 11-week trial. The presiding judge allowed Silkwood attorneys to argue for \$71.5 million, but jurors were not limited by that amount.

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## 'In God We Trust' survives

# Supreme Court keeps motto

**United Press International**  
**WASHINGTON** — The Supreme Court Monday rebuffed an attempt by atheists to challenge the national motto, "In God We Trust," and its use on dollar bills and coins.

The justices let stand a lower-court opinion that government use of the national motto does not advance religion.

In September 1977, atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair and John Garth Murray challenged the statute making "In God We Trust" the national motto, claiming it violates the Constitution's guarantee of religious freedom and free speech.

They also challenged on the same grounds statutes ordering the motto imprinted on bills and coins and laws making it a criminal offense to remove the phrase from currency.

A federal trial judge in Texas dismissed the case, noting the motto "has nothing whatsoever to do with the establishment of religion. Its use is of a patriotic or ceremonial character and bears no true resemblance to a governmental sponsorship of a religious exercise."

"Moreover," said Judge Jack Roberts, "it would be ludicrous to argue that the use of the national motto fosters any excessive government entanglement with religion."

While an appeal was pending before the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, President Carter signed a bill authorizing replacement of the current dollar coin with a new Susan B. Anthony dollar, bearing the motto "In God We Trust."

O'Hair was joined by 38 atheist organizations and 200 individuals in asking that the Treasury Department be barred from minting and distributing the new coin.

A three-judge panel denied the request and on Jan. 18, 1979, affirmed the ruling of the lower-court upholding the use of the national motto.

Mrs. O'Hair and Murray appealed to the Supreme Court, arguing the district court heard no evidence "as to the impact upon the freedom of conscience of atheists who are compelled to carry upon their body, in their clothing, or in accompanying purses, government sponsored religious sloganing which they abhor."

"In the ordinary course of daily life they are, many times each day, forced to broadcast a trust in God in their unavoidable handling of the coin of the realm," Mrs. O'Hair and Murray argued.

Mrs. O'Hair brought the suit that resulted in the Supreme Court banning prayer from public schools.

## FAA defends delay in grounding DC-10s

**United Press International**  
**WASHINGTON** — Federal Aviation Administrator Langhorne Bond Monday defended the 13-day delay in his grounding of DC-10 jets after a fiery Chicago crash despite earlier hints of design problems in the aircraft.

Referring to the June 6 grounding of DC-10s for thorough design checks, Bond told a House transportation subcommittee headed by Rep. John Burton, D-Calif.

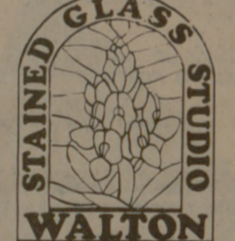
"We have acted responsibly and promptly to assure the safety of the flying public. We have not been hesitant to take those actions merited by our assessment of the information made available to us."

But Burton criticized the FAA for

not taking decisive action in 1975 against the controversial jet made by McDonnell Douglas Corp. In addition to the DC-10s, Bond over the weekend ordered inspections of pylons on the Boeing 747, Lockheed L-1011 and the A-300 jets in domestic fleets.

FAA official Greg Beard told the committee the 1975 bulletin that cited 11 instances of cracks was reviewed by the agency's technical staff, which decided it was not necessary to withdraw the plane's airworthiness directive at that time.

Shortly after Bond testified, the Airline Passengers Association appeared before the committee to demand that President Carter fire Bond.



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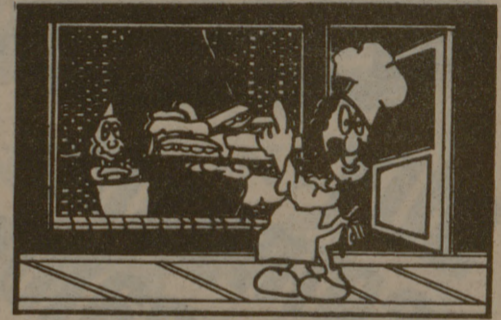
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