

## Ford 'no-fault' divorce trial starts before packed court

**United Press International**  
DETROIT — The long-awaited divorce trial of automotive magnate Henry Ford II and his estranged wife, Cristina, began in Wayne County Circuit Court Tuesday, the 15th anniversary of their marriage. The trial was delayed for 45 minutes because of the late arrival of Mrs. Ford and her attorney. "She was late for her marriage, she's late for her divorce," quipped Ford's attorney, Milton J. Miller.

About 100 people, including dozens of reporters and society watchers, packed a courtroom designed to hold only 60. Ford, seeking to avoid reporters, slipped in through a side door. "I have nothing to say," Ford said before proceedings got under way before Judge John R. Kirwan.

Neither side is contesting the divorce under Michigan's no-fault divorce law. Miller said the trial has just one purpose — "money." "This is not the way we prefer to adjudicate divorce cases," Miller said of the intense publicity surrounding the trial.

Some of the best-known names in Detroit society are on the list of potential witnesses.

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# Pinto design 'as good or better' than other cars, Ford official says

**United Press International**  
WINAMAC, Ind. — Ford Vice President Harold Macdonald, testifying in the Ford Pinto trial, called the Pinto at least as good a car as the average auto on the nation's highways. He included the placement of the Pinto's gas tank in his analysis.

MacDonald said his father fell asleep at the wheel of his Model A Ford in 1932 and burned to death when it hit a tree and caught fire.

"This is one of the reasons I had great personal concern about the placement of the fuel tank in the 1973 Pinto," MacDonald said Monday at the opening of the sixth week of testimony in Ford's reckless homicide trial.

The company is charged in the deaths of three young women whose 1973 Pinto caught fire following a rear-end collision.

MacDonald, who called himself "senior officer responsible for the car," cited federal statistics he said showed the Pinto "was as good or better than the average car on the road."

He said U.S. figures for 1975-76 showed 673 fatal auto accident involving fire, of which 13 involved Pintos. At the time there were 96 million cars in operation, of which 1,850,000 were Pintos.

MacDonald said he was unaware

of another set of federal statistics showing the 1973 Pinto had twice the fire deaths of other cars involved in rear-end collisions. Prosecutor Michael Cosentino said it was on the basis of these statistics that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration advised Ford to recall the Pinto to strengthen its fuel system.

"I am not familiar with those statistics," MacDonald replied to each of a series of questions in which Cosentino cited figures from the study.

Judge Harold Staffeldt ordered jurors to disregard the questions. Cosentino told reporters the jury had heard his figures, and he hoped they would remember them.

MacDonald, now a vice president in charge of engineering and research, was chief engineer for Ford passenger cars from 1965 to 1975. He said he not only was in charge of the 1973 Pinto, but he and his son both owned and drove them.

MacDonald said in rear end collisions, the higher the fuel tank, the more easily it is punctured. He said that's why he feels the 1973 Pinto tank, below the floorboards and behind the axle, was safer than tank in the 1973 Toyota Corolla and British-made Ford Capri which were above the axle directly behind the rear seat.



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## Nimitz center seeks funding

**United Press International**  
FREDERICKSBURG — The late Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz commanded the largest naval force ever assembled, but he is most admired, and perhaps best known, in the nation he helped defeat.

Thousands of ships and aircraft and 2,063,311 men and women served under the quiet Texas in the Pacific, but officials of the Admiral Nimitz Center say he has not been afforded the honors he deserved in the United States mainly because he was not as flamboyant as a George Patton or a William Halsey.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt bypassed 28 Admirals senior to him and personally selected Nimitz, a student of early 20th Century Japanese Admiral Heihachiro Togo, to take command of the Pacific Fleet which had been broken by the attack on Pearl Harbor.

From the battered remnants of Pearl Harbor Nimitz's command grew into the greatest naval armada in history and it eventually defeated the Japanese Navy and led to America's victory in World War II.

As commander-in-chief in the Pacific, Nimitz headed all American and allied military forces — Navy, Army, Coast Guard, Air Force, Marines — operating in the world's largest ocean.

In Japan, Nimitz is numbered among the three most admired admirals, along with Togo and Britain's Lord Nelson, but he is the last of the great U.S. World War II leaders to be honored at home with a museum or memorial.

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Officials of the Admiral Nimitz Center have raised about \$200,000 for the project through various fund-raising functions and benefit dinners in Dallas and Houston, but Hubbard said \$400,000 more is needed and now being raised through a campaign to renovate the hotel, tentatively scheduled to be completed in about a year.

Nimitz's lack of publicity might be one reason why fundraising is so slow, Hubbard indicated.

"The thing is he was so damn modest that it made him back away from the limelight," Hubbard said. "That reason a lot of kids in Fredericksburg don't know who Nimitz is. Yet you talk about the Alamo — don't belittle the Alamo in any way — but you had a couple of hundred guys there and, gee, everybody knows about them."

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