

National

Suits filed against Hyatt

United Press International
KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Even before city officials Tuesday could open building records of the Hyatt Regency Hotel where 111 party guests died beneath steel and concrete rubble, three lawsuits were filed charging safety hazards.

More than two dozen victims of the disaster were buried Monday and three dozen more were scheduled for burial Tuesday.

Mark D. Williams, 34, who remained hospitalized, filed suit Monday in Jackson County Circuit Court seeking \$100 million in punitive damages and \$1 million in actual damages. His suit charges there were "serious defects in the 'sky walks,' and as a result the premises were dangerous to the public."

A petition in the case, in which the Hyatt Corp. and Crown Center Redevelopment Corp. are defendants, also cites the defendants "complete indifference to and conscious disregard for the safety of the public."

The three children of victim Richard G. DeKruyf, 56, filed a \$2 million wrongful death suit in Jackson County Circuit Court Monday. In that suit, the petition alleges the defendants "failed to use reasonable care to make the premises safe."

Two children of Susan Moberg, 46, another one of the victims, filed a petition in federal District Court Monday alleging the defendants — the Hyatt Hotels Corp. and the Crown Center Redevelopment Corp. — failed to use "reasonable care in the review and approval" of the design, construction, inspection and maintenance of the \$50-million, 40-story luxury hotel.

An architectural expert and the subcontractor who designed the skywalks denied reports they were experimental structures, saying such bridges had been features of other buildings for years.

In another development, the Kansas City Times Tuesday published a copyright story on a draft copy of a 22-month, blue-ribbon study the newspaper said warns of peculiar hazards in the type of "longspan" construction used at the hotel. The study, "Towards Safer Long-Span Buildings," is scheduled to be published this week by the American Institute of Architects.

The 150-foot-long walkways — which Hyatt Corp. officials have claimed were "designed to hold people shoulder-to-shoulder, as many as you can jam on there" — had been one of the most eye-catching features of the hotel's futuristic, five-story atrium.

But in 15 deadly seconds Friday, the uppermost bridge folded and fell from its ceiling moorings, raining people and massive chunks of concrete onto a second-floor walkway. It too crumbled and crashed onto a dance floor crowded with jitterbuggers dancing to the Big Band sound. Mayor Richard Berkley pledged to reporters that night all city records pertaining to the hotel's building and maintenance would be immediately released to the public. However, it took the city attorney, who said they first had to be catalogued, four days to comply.

"I'm not entirely sure what you will find in there of interest," Berkley said of the records. "I'm not a technical expert."

Kansas City's mayor has proposed formation of a private citizen task force to "launch an impartial investigation" into the collapse of the two aerial walkways.

"We're working on that. There will be a citizen's committee," he said.

The question of what caused the worst disaster in the city's history was briefly addressed Monday by the St. Louis subcontractor who designed the steel-and-concrete skywalks. Jack D. Gillum, head of Gillum-Colaco Consulting Structural Engineers, said the type of skywalks his firm designed at the Hyatt are not unusual.

"They have done a preliminary investigation and have made sure of what we did," Gillum said. "Hung structures have been designed for years. We've done others and never had a problem."

The Kansas City Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, in a separate news conference, reached a similar conclusion. President E. Crichton Singleton also said any speculation before the inquiries — five at last count — were completed would be "counterproductive."

Throughout the city, church bells rang and flags remained at half staff as the first of the Hyatt Regency disaster victims were buried. More than two dozen funerals were conducted Monday and another three dozen were scheduled for Tuesday.

the small society

by Brickman



Miss Universe comments on Reagan, U.S. teams

United Press International
NEW YORK — Miss Venezuela, an engineering student who likes Ronald Reagan and the Cincinnati Reds, was named the "most beautiful girl in the world" Monday night in the 1981 Miss Universe Pageant.

Irene Saez Conde, 19, defeated 75 other contestants to win the title at the Minskoff Theater in New York City. The pageant was televised live to an estimated 600 million viewers around the world.

student in Caracas, who says she chose her field of study because she hopes "to see buildings grow like children."

The new Miss Universe joined some of her fellow contestants at a Manhattan disco after the pageant, and said her first thought when being crowned was "thank God."

Conde will receive cash and prizes worth \$100,000, including a fur coat, a sports car, a diamond and gold pendant and a new pair of shoes for every week of the year.

The first runner-up was Dominique Dufour of Toronto, Canada. Second runner-up was Evalena Lundgren, 19, a model from Pitea, Sweden. The third runner-up was Adriana De Oliveira, 18, a model from Porto Alegre, Brazil, and fourth runner-up was Dominique Dan Eeckhoudt, 20, hostess

from Brussels, Belgium. Miss U.S.A., Kim Seelbrede, 20, of Germantown, Ohio, was among the 12 semi-finalists but did not make the finals.

Beauty queens from 76 countries vied for the Miss Universe title. A 77th candidate, Miss Mauritius, returned to her homeland Sunday because she was "homesick," a pageant spokesman said. Two other initial contestants also were not in the running.

Debra Ann Fountain of New York was ousted from the Miss U.S.A. finals for filling out her swimsuit top with foam rubber falsies. Another contestant, Doris Loh, originally named Miss Hong Kong, had given her age as 22 but was dismissed by her local committee after they discovered she actually was 25.

Senate rejects amendment

Social benefit voted down

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The Senate Tuesday voted 52-46 against a move to save the \$122-a-month minimum Social Security benefit that President Reagan wants to drop.

As the amendment to Reagan's tax cut bill was being defeated on a party-line vote, elderly protesters gathered for a demonstration on Capitol Hill, and the House prepared to vote on a non-binding resolution opposing the administration cut.

The Senate measure, which would have had the force of law, was sponsored by Sen. Donald Riegle, D-Mich., and a raft of other Democrats up for reelection next year.

That prompted Senate Finance Committee chairman Bob Dole, R-Kan., to charge "political terrorism from the left, from those who are looking at the politics of the system instead of the soundness of the system."

Riegle, referring to the "poor old souls" who would be affected, and Sen. Russell Long, D-La., calling them "dear little people," argued there should be room enough to include the 3 million elderly recipients in the proposed \$686 billion tax cut over five years.

Minimum benefits are paid to those whose contributions to the system are not large enough to be eligible for regular Social Security.

The administration has said only about 300,000 people would be seriously affected, and they could be eligible for up to \$10,000 a year in benefits under other government programs.

Reagan told congressional leaders Monday he is planning a nationally broadcast address in an effort to snuff out a Democratic uprising and call for a bipartisan remedy for the financially troubled Social Security system.

House Speaker Thomas O'Neill said Tuesday Democrats will continue to hammer away at the Social Security issue to show Reagan he can't "talk out of both sides of his mouth and get away with it."

He said Reagan once promised he would never cut Social Security benefits, and now Democrats would be "putting their (Republicans') feet to the fire."

In a letter to House and Senate leaders, Reagan accused Democrats of "political maneuvering" in opposing a move to terminate the minimum Social Security benefit. "These efforts appear designed

to exploit an issue rather than find a solution to the urgent Social Security problem," Reagan said in the letter, which was released Monday and drew immediate response from O'Neill.

Both the House and Senate, in separate versions of a huge budget-cutting bill, approved termination of the minimum benefit.

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Refugees to enter U.S.

United Press International
WASHINGTON — President Reagan has agreed to admit an additional 2,400 refugees from Eastern Europe into the United States during the rest of the fiscal year, the State Department said Saturday.

The State Department, in response to urgent appeals from the government of Austria, asked the attorney general in June to seek congressional concurrence in increasing the refugee admissions numbers for East Europeans by 2,400 for Fiscal Year 1981, from 4,500 to 6,900, a State Department spokesman said.

The House Judiciary Committee already has agreed to the new limit and the Senate Judiciary Committee also is expected to go along, the spokesman said.

While many of the additional refugees are expected to be Polish, the 6,900 limit applies to all Eastern European refugees, he said. Austria is the primary gateway for refugees leaving Eastern bloc countries.

As opposed to regular immigration country quotas, there are no country quotas for refugees from Eastern Europe this year, the spokesman said.

The new quota applies only for the remainder of the 1981 fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30, he said.

The 1982 refugee admission ceiling will be set by Reagan in September after consulting with Congress.

Through June, the United States has admitted 3,317 Eastern European refugees from Austria and other European processing centers, the State Department said.

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July 22-28

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PG • A PARAMOUNT PICTURE

Thursday

BILL MURRAY

MEATBALLS

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Friday

CHAPTER TWO

PG

Friday

WHAT'S UP, DOC?

Wednesday

SILVER STREAK

Saturday

JULIA

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Sunday

William Powell Myrna Loy

THE THIN MAN

Monday

Paramount Pictures Presents

HAROLD and MAUDE

Color by Technicolor
A Paramount Picture

Tuesday