

Press gains legal ground

United Press International

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court ruled unanimously Wednesday that judges may only in "rare instances" bar reporters and the public from jury selection in a criminal trial.

In a decision hailed by press groups, Chief Justice Warren Burger suggested that such proceedings may only be closed by a judge when there is good reason to believe that a prospective juror might be publicly embarrassed by questioning in open court.

But other justices, joining Burger's ruling but writing separately, said jurors' privacy

rights remain to be settled in the future.

The 9-0 ruling came in a case brought by the Riverside, Calif., Press-Enterprise, which appealed the decision of a judge who barred the public and reporters from most jury-selection proceedings at a 1981 murder trial, then refused to give reporters a transcript of those proceedings.

"Closed proceedings, although not absolutely precluded, must be rare and only for cause shown that outweighs the value of openness," Burger wrote in finding that the trial judge acted wrongly. Three justices wrote con-

curring opinions to emphasize that the ruling does not cancel the right of prospective jurors to privacy during pre-trial proceedings.

Justice Harry Blackmun, for example, said, "A juror has a valid interest in not being required to disclose to all the world highly personal or embarrassing information simply because he is called to do his public duty."

Press-Enterprise Executive Editor Norman Cherniss said he was "pleased" by the decision.

"It seems to us to have been essentially an extension of what the court has ruled before — that the openness the

court wants for trials should also apply to jury selection. It's a victory for the press and the public too if you believe in open trials," Cherniss said.

Jack Landau, a spokesman for the Reporters' Committee on Freedom of the Press, said, "I don't think the court could have written this opinion any stronger. There are only rare instances when (closure) should ever be approved. The judge has to say there is no other way to do it.

"I think there is a small opening (for judges to close jury selection) but, overall I think they have made it very, very tight now," Landau said.

Continental to resume contract negotiations

United Press International

HOUSTON — Continental Airlines Wednesday sent telegrams to representatives of pilot and flight attendant unions seeking a meeting next week to resume contract negotiations, a spokesman said.

The action was taken on the order of U.S. Bankruptcy Judge R.F. Wheless Jr., who Tuesday upheld Continental's petition for reorganization under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code.

The judge, in ruling that Continental had no alternative but to file for bankruptcy, rejected a motion by the Air Line Pilots Association, the Union of Flight Attendants, and the International Association of Machinists claiming the action was an effort to break the unions.

Wheless reminded lawyers of a Jan. 30 hearing on Continental's motion to void labor contracts with the three unions and urged both sides to try to settle their difference at the bargaining table before they return to court.

"As the judge has requested and as we have done in the past, we will be prepared to present a contract proposal to hopefully end the

labor dispute," said Continental spokesman Bruce Hicks.

Hicks said a date for the meeting was not set, but it would be arranged at a time "mutually acceptable" to both sides.

ALPA spokesman Jerry Baldwin said as of 4 p.m. the union had not received a telegram, but that resumption of talks which broke off Dec. 20 would be welcomed.

"It is quite clear in the judges decision that he recognizes the Air Line Pilots Association have been willing since the beginning to make what concessions are necessary to keep the airline a viable enterprise," he said.

"In light of that fact, we welcome a proposal as an offer of settling the issues," he said. "I sincerely hope and trust that they will take the judge at his word and present us with a proposal addressing the economic issues."

ALPA spokesman Chuck Arthur said attorneys for the union expected to file an appeal of Wheless' ruling this week.

The battle between Continental and the three unions began in September, when

Continental filed for reorganization. The company stopped flying for two days, then resumed flying a reduced schedule with one-third of its employees working at half pay. It installed new work rules and pay schedule.

ALPA and UFA struck Continental Oct. 1 to protest the job cutbacks and the payroll slashing action the claim effectively voided the contracts. The IAM went on strike Aug. 13, prior to a bankruptcy filing, after contract talks failed.

Negotiations between the pilots union and the airline broke down in December over the issue of seniority. The union wants pilots returned to work, but Continental says it will not replace pilots who worked through the strike who were hired after the strike began.

"We're hoping their position has changed," Hicks said.

When asked if there was hope for a settlement to the labor dispute prior to the hearing in bankruptcy court, Hicks said: "Anytime you're talking there is a chance."

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West Texas fossils studied

ALPINE — In the days before dinosaurs, 200 million years ago, West Texas was a delta area, according to a scientific report by two Sul Ross State University professors, university officials said Wednesday.

A definitive scientific report on ancient plant fossils discovered by an SRSU geology graduate student in the Del Norte Mountains near here will appear in Friday's issue of "Science," the journal for the American Association for the Advancement of Science, university officials said.

The paper, "Late Leonardian Plants from West Texas: The Youngest Paleozoic Plant Mega-fossils in North America," was co-authored by two Sul Ross faculty members in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution.

Assistant professor of geology, Dr. David M. Rohr and assistant professor of biology Dr. John M. Miller of SRSU col-

laborated with Dr. Sergius H. Mamay of the Smithsonian on the paper, which deals with Permian plant fossils discovered in 1981.

Mamay is considered the world expert on North American plant fossils from the Paleozoic and was invited to supervise excavations at the discovery site near Alpine in 1982.

Rohr said the significance of the find lies in the fact that these plant fossils are the youngest Paleozoic plant fossils yet discovered in North America.

The fossils are expected to provide other researchers with key information on conditions in North America more than 200 million years ago.

Miller, a botanist, was responsible for the preliminary identification of the plant megafossils. The largest of the specimens measures about eight inches long and is the leaf from a long

extinct plant known as "Gymnopteris."

Several preliminary reports on the fossil find have appeared in other scientific journals during the preparation of the definitive report on the discovery, SRSU officials said.

By piecing together evidence from the plant fossils and marine fossils, the researchers have developed a theory that the area under investigation was an ancient delta environment on the edge of the energy-rich Permian Basin.

Rohr said studies have pointed out a gap in information from this time period. He said the paper should narrow the gap between Paleozoic time and the ensuing Mesozoic, when giant reptiles came to dominate the earth's surface.

The journal, "Science," said, "is probably the best respected interdisciplinary scientific journal in North America."

Pope blessing received for Village project here

By MARSHA MCDADE Reporter

Pope John Paul II has blessed the Texas A&M Village of Hope project, according to a letter sent to the project's adviser.

Dr. Robert Scott Kellner, the adviser, Tuesday received the letter from Monsignor G.B. Re. The letter said Pope John Paul is praying for the village's success.

Kellner was delighted about receiving the letter.

"I feel that Pope John Paul II is a great humanitarian whose interest in solving the problems of world hunger and war gives us all hope for the future," Kellner said. "In knowing of his interest in this A&M project, in having received this papal blessing is truly exciting and uplifting."

Kellner sent a letter to the pope six weeks ago, telling him about the Village of Hope and asking for his blessings and guidance. Kellner also sent the pope letters he had received from President Reagan and Secretary of State George Shultz,

commending the students and faculty of A&M for saving lives of the village's population.

The Village of Hope is a project sponsored by many Texas A&M student groups working through the Christian Children's Fund. After actress Struthers, a spokeswoman for CCF, came to A&M in 1983, the Catholic Student Association and the Interfraternity Council pledged \$25,000 to the people of a needy village Amaga, Colombia, became Village of Hope.

Since April, Kellner said, more than 100 student groups have become involved and have raised close to \$23,000.

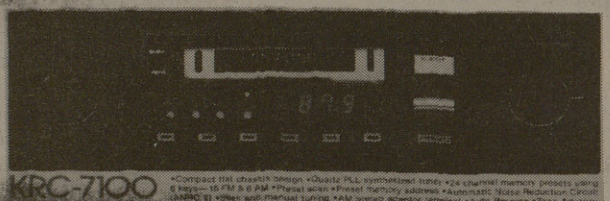
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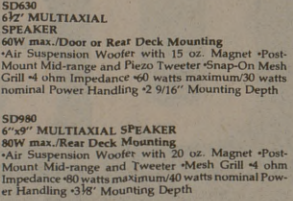
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