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Supreme Court rules against school prayer

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Strongly reaffirming its 1962 ban on organized prayer in public schools, the Supreme Court on Tuesday outlawed daily moments of silence if students are told they may pray during that time.

By a 6-3 vote, the justices ruled that an Alabama law allowing such periods for "meditation or voluntary prayer" by public school students violated the constitutionally required separation of church and state.

The decision does not necessarily mean that every state law providing for such daily moments of silence is invalid. If the law does not mention "prayer" — and if state legislators did not intend the law to endorse school prayer — it is valid.

About half the states have moment-of-silence laws, but not all of them mention prayer. For example, Arizona and Connecticut laws provide for "silent meditation" without mentioning prayer.

Writing for the court, Justice John Paul Stevens said, "The addition of 'or voluntary prayer' indicates that the state intended to characterize prayer as a favored practice. Such an endorsement is not consistent with the established principle that the government must pursue a course of complete neutrality toward religion."

The case was as politically charged as any on the high court's docket this year. Numerous political candidates in 1984 — including President Reagan — called for a return of organized prayer in public schools.

The Reagan administration, entering the Alabama case as a "friend of the court," told the justices that such state laws "enhance the opportunity for students to include silent prayer as part of their activities at school."

President Reagan favors a constitutional amendment that would, in effect, overturn the Supreme Court's 1962 decision.

The 1962 ruling did not outlaw "voluntary prayers" in public schools. Instead the court's ruling 23 years ago drew the line at official sponsorship of prayer sessions. No state or student can stop a student from engaging in silent prayer.

Terry Eastland, chief spokesman for Attorney General Edwin Meese III, said: "We regret that the court did not agree with our position in the moment-of-silence case. We are pleased, however, that the court did not hold that the moment-of-silence laws now existing in some two dozen states offend the Constitution."

Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., another backer of a constitutional amendment to allow school prayer sessions, called the decision "unfortunate and unfair."

Dan Alexander, former president of the Mobile, Ala., County School Board and now head of a pro-prayer organization called Save Our Schools, called the ruling a disappointment.

The ruling had its enthusiastic backers as well.

Sen. Lowell Weicker, R-Conn., said, "The court's decision reaffirms that, uniquely in the United States, religion is a matter personal to each of us and not the business of government."

Charles Sims, an American Civil Liberties Union lawyer in New York City, praised the decision and said its importance will transcend the school-prayer controversy.

Joining Stevens in Tuesday's ruling were Justices William J. Brennan, Thurgood Marshall, Harry A. Blackmun and Lewis F. Powell. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor agreed in a separate opinion.

Welcome Back!



Summer school students stand in line to get their official "greeting cards" from the University — a fee slip and

class schedule for the first session. Students have until June 6 to pay their fees.

Photo by GREG BAILEY

Father, son arraigned in spy case

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — A retired Navy officer and his seaman son pleaded innocent Tuesday to charges of spying for the Soviet Union.

John Walker Jr., 47, who left the Navy in 1976, and his son, Michael Walker, 22, a seaman on the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz, entered a U.S. District courtroom together to enter pleas before Judge Alexander Harvey II.

Attorneys met with the judge privately to begin discussion on ground rules for access to classified Navy documents for this case. The judge set a pretrial conference on preliminary motions for July 3.

In Norfolk, Va., the Internal Revenue Service was granted a state circuit court order placing a \$250,000 lien on the elder Walker's property there. The IRS said he owes \$252,487.66 in back federal taxes since 1979.

Jerry Alfred Whitworth, 45, of Davis, Calif., was arrested Monday in this widening espionage case. He was later ordered held without bail after he surrendered on charges of conspiracy to deliver top-secret national defense information to the Soviets.

Walker's brother, Arthur, 50, has also been arrested, and court documents indicate a fifth person, represented by the code name "F," was also involved in spying.

John Walker's attorney, Fred Warren Bennett, denied that his client has cooperated with the FBI. Bennett filed a motion on Monday accusing Bill Baker, assistant director of the FBI, of violating a local court rule prohibiting the dissemination of information not on the public record that could prejudice a case.

The judge indicated during the arraignment that he would sign a preliminary injunction ordering Baker to adhere to the rule.

John Walker's right to have court-appointed counsel is being reassessed because of a new financial statement, which shows he has a net worth of \$174,000. Bennett, however, said that Walker did not have enough ready cash to meet legal fees.

One of Walker's daughters, Margaret Walker, 27, has told authorities she would be willing to help her father, but Bennett said she could not provide enough assistance.

The elder Walker allegedly tried to recruit another daughter, Laura Walker Snyder, into the spy ring when she was an Army communications specialist from 1978-1979, two FBI informants said in an affidavit filed in support of the charges against Whitworth.

Army records indicate that she married while in the Army to Phillip M. Snyder, and the Army is trying to determine if Snyder also was in the service, Army spokeswoman Elaine Henrion said.

Whitworth, previously identified by the code name "D," faces a detention hearing Friday and a preliminary hearing June 18. He did not enter a plea.

University expanding to meet demands

A&M planning, building new facilities

By JERRY OSLIN
Staff Writer

Closed streets and the sound of jackhammers should continue to be a part of life at Texas A&M as the University continues its construction of new buildings.

Gen. Wesley Peel, vice chancellor of facilities planning and construction, said the new Chemistry Building, being built at the corner of Spence and Ross streets, is behind schedule. It was scheduled to be completed in May 1986.

Peel said construction of the \$14.4 million building is behind schedule because of the large amount of rain

last winter.

"When they were digging the hole for the building, the rain kept filling it up," he said. "Whenever they pumped the water out, it rained."

The new building will consist primarily of laboratories, he said.

The Engineering/Physics Building, originally priced at \$12.3 million, will be completed in April 1986, Peel said.

Peel said construction on the new Medical Sciences Library is complete and that the library should be fully occupied by July. A new underground walkway running under University Drive connects the library

with the Veterinary Medicine Complex.

And construction on the new alumni center should begin in a few days, Peel said.

The aerobics track, surrounding the proposed site of the new center, will be rerouted behind the construction site but will be rebuilt after the center is completed, he said. Houston Street at Jersey Street intersection will be closed sometime during construction, Peel said.

A new track and events center and a new intramural center off Jersey Street west of Welborn Road will open this December, Peel said.

Construction on the Physiology

Research and Conditioning Laboratory, located next to the University's tennis courts, will be completed in May 1986, he said. The athletic and physical education departments will share the use of the \$1.79 million building, Peel said.

Construction of a new Poultry Science Center will be completed in March 1986, he said. The original price of the center was \$3.7 million, Peel said. The center will be located off Farm Road 2818, south of Jersey Street.

Construction of a new Civil Engineering/Texas Transportation Institute/Engineering Design Graphics Complex has been approved by the

Board of Regents and should begin sometime in September, Peel said.

The \$11.3 million complex will take about 18 months to construct and will consist of an eight-story tower and a four-story lab building, he said. A restaurant will occupy the entire first floor of the tower, he said.

Peel said the University will need more parking because of all the new construction. He said the University plans to build 5-story parking garage that would hold 2,000 cars, but the Board has yet to approve the plan. The garage would be built on the site where the physical plant currently stands.

'Star Wars' survives senators' attempts to restrict program

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Reagan's "Star Wars" proposal for a futuristic shield against nuclear attack survived five Senate attempts Tuesday to limit the research program's spending and scope.

The Senate rejected, 78-21, a move by Sen. John F. Kerry, D-Mass., which basically would have limited Star Wars spending to the current level of \$1.4 billion.

Kerry said that even Star Wars supporters agree the system won't be totally effective, and added that "any system less than 100 percent effective renders us open to an unacceptable level of

damage" from a Soviet strike.

But Sen. John Warner, R-Va., said Kerry's move "would gut the program" and contended the research plan was the only reason the Soviets had renewed arms control talks.

Later, the chamber rejected, 57-38, a proposal to cut Star Wars spending to about half the \$3.7 billion Reagan originally sought next year and ban some tests and research which critics said could violate arms control treaties.

And still another attempt to limit the program to \$2.5 billion next year was defeated 59-36. It

was proposed by Sen. Albert Gore, D-Tenn., who also proposed limits on tests.

As the night wore on, Sen. Malcolm Wallop, R-Wyo., was defeated, 62-33, on his proposal, which would have ordered some of the Star Wars money to be spent on systems that could be deployed in the near future.

And later, Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., lost 48-38 when he proposed the creation of a 10-member panel which would oversee the program and report back to Congress.

CS man receives 99 years for sexually assaulting child

By KAREN BLOCH
Reporter

A College Station man was sentenced to serve 99 years in the state penitentiary Tuesday after being found guilty of sexually assaulting his 4-year-old stepdaughter.

Richard "Ricky Don" Green, 23, was convicted of charges filed by his wife, Velisa Green. These charges held that he sexually assaulted his stepdaughter Feb. 13, 1985.

The two-day trial in the 272nd District Court ended Tuesday when the jury, after one hour of deliberations, recommended that presiding Judge John Delaney sentence Green

to 99 years in the Texas Department of Corrections.

A videotape of testimony given by the 4-year-old was admitted as evidence by the state Monday. The defense attempted to show the child was an incompetent witness by calling her on the stand Tuesday but failed to do so.

Closing arguments for the prosecution, made by District Attorney Bill Turner, focused on Green's prior conviction, bad reputation and the seriousness of his crime. The state requested that the jury assign Green the maximum penalty of life in prison.

Defense attorney Joseph Nance based his argument for leniency in sentencing on the fact that Green had never before been accused of a sex-related crime.

Since this was Green's second felony conviction, possible sentences were life or no less than 15 years in prison and a fine not to exceed \$10,000.

Green was sentenced to serve 6 years in prison in 1982 for committing a felony robbery.

A request for appeal on the decision may be made by Green within two weeks.