

STATE AND LOCAL

Judge says job includes educating community

By RICKY TELG
Reporter

Judge Carolyn Ruffino, Brazos County court-at-law judge, says being a judge can be like teaching inside a fishbowl.

"Everything I say and do is watched, which I don't like," she says.

A judge's life is quite different from most people's lives, Ruffino says, because everything a judge does or says is watched and heard by the courtroom audience.

But, she says, a judge must put this feeling aside and do a job many people don't associate with a judge — teaching.

"Sometimes my role as judge is to be an educator to those in the community who need to understand what that position really means," Ruffino says.

Ruffino, 39, always wears a self-confident expression, but the 5-foot-1-inch woman does not look like a judge by conventional standards.

"If people see me out on the street in plain clothes, and find out I'm a judge, they're surprised, shocked," she says. "They'll look and say, 'You don't look like a judge.' I guess they feel that way because of my being small in stature. Or, some people might not be accustomed to seeing a woman as a judge."

A court-at-law handles civil cases involving money disputes between \$500 to \$10,000. It also handles special areas including criminal misdemeanors, probate and juvenile cases.

Ruffino, a lifetime Bryan resident, has responsibilities incorporating two different jobs: an administrator and a law enforcer.

In her office, she works on administrative problems concerning guardianship or juveniles. In the courtroom, she presides over the bench and over the court-at-law cases.



Photo by ANTHONY S. CASPER

Judge Carolyn Ruffino sits in her "classroom."

Ruffino says the toughest part of her job is making decisions that will hurt one or both parties, but such decisions "come with the territory."

"I find people are irresponsible in accepting the consequences of their actions," she says. "And sometimes, I have to be the one to make them toe-the-line or make parameters and say: 'This is a game, and don't cross that line, because if you do, you lose.' They may not understand it then, but hopefully, they will later in their life."

Ruffino became interested in law when she was in high school. She says her height was a factor in the decision.

"I always liked to fight for the underdog," she says. "Being a small person, I learned to fight."

Ruffino says the mechanics of her job can be monotonous at times. Each time someone comes before her in the courtroom, she has to

read him his rights. If she doesn't, she can be brought to trial through the appeals process.

"I've got to watch what I say," she says. "If I do not sufficiently advise them of their rights, it can come back later on another appeal."

Ruffino says her main goal as a judge is to be fair.

"Sometimes I come across to people as being unconcerned or hard," she says. "It's not that at all. I'm looking through closed eyes, so that I am not biased by what I see or who I see before me. That's very hard to do, but it's the way I've trained myself to be a judge."

Ruffino says she has only one goal in life: to learn.

"My goal is to learn as much as I can," she says. "When I get bored, I'll just leave the house and go to the park or pick up a book that I haven't read. To me, that's the challenge of life: always looking for something new and different."

Clements says Gramm acting like Democrat

Associated Press

AUSTIN — Former Gov. Bill Clements says U.S. Sen. Phil Gramm should stay out of the 1986 Republican primary race for governor, as Clements says he plans to do.

Clements told reporters Tuesday that Gramm's endorsement of Kent Hance as a Republican gubernatorial candidate could be divisive to the state party.

"An endorsement by a senior person, such as Senator Gramm or myself with the position I've had, really is divisive and causes a polarization in the Republican Party," Clements said.

"It could cause some hard feelings and we would have some wounds and scars from it that wouldn't be helpful at election time."

Clements added that "this is more of a Democratic way of acting and maybe Sen. Gramm just hasn't got used to being in the Republican Party yet."

Gramm, who switched parties in 1982, said in a newspaper interview over the weekend that he would endorse Hance if the former congressman runs for governor because he personally recruited Hance for the GOP.

Clements said he had told Gramm "that in my judgment, it would be better not to endorse any candidate."

Clements said he has told all eight potential candidates for governor who have visited him that he would help them equally.

Ruling

State ordered to place mentally ill, retarded

Associated Press

TYLER — A federal judge Wednesday ordered the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation to place 279 clients from three state schools in community homes by September 1986.

U.S. District Judge William Wayne Justice also ordered the state to implement an appeals process for dissatisfied parents of state school residents and to report monthly on the rate of community placement to Dr. Linda O'Neill, the expert consultant appointed to monitor the state's compliance with a 1983 order.

The order is the result of a hearing in April called after attorneys for residents in those three state schools filed a motion asking that the state be forced into compliance with a settlement of the case.

The plaintiffs maintained the state failed to meet required deadlines for moving the recommended number of residents into the community.

"It is now abundantly clear that the defendants have failed — and will continue to fail, without correction from the court — adequately to fulfill their responsibilities with regard to community placement," the judge's order stated.

Justice followed recommendations of O'Neill in his ruling.

Parent groups, which crowded Justice's courtroom during the hearing, showed resistance to the plan to

move their children into the community.

Although the plaintiff's attorneys asked that members of three groups — school-aged children, non-mentally retarded residents and those recommended by treatment teams for placement — be placed, Justice granted the order only for the last group.

The order outlines a temporary appeals process for parents who object to their child's placement in the community or those parents who want to contest the treatment teams' recommendation to leave a resident in the state school.

"It was apparent throughout the hearing that parents were deeply concerned that the state would usurp them in deciding what was best for their children and leave them without recourse and their children without security," the order stated.

Justice ordered the parties to agree on a hearing officer or panel with 15 days or the court will appoint one. A more permanent process will be formed later.

O'Neill's plan proposed the 279 placements, and she demonstrated in the courtroom how communities across the state could absorb the school-aged children with no major consequences. She said only six areas would be receiving more than nine students.

Child sex-ring shocks community; residents disgusted with findings

Associated Press

HOOP-AND-HOLLER — The unraveling story of a child-sex ring and the arrest of six men have stunned this small East Texas community, described by one official as "just like something out of Li'l Abner."

Many of the 200 residents congregate daily at the only grocery store in Hoop-and-Holler, a subdivision of the town Rye, to hear all they can about the investigation.

"It's a dirty shame," said Joe Thompson, a retired laborer. "This place has got to be cleaned up."

Authorities learned of the child-sex ring May 8 when four girls called authorities and asked to tell "the whole story of what was going on," said Liberty County Constable Paul Lognion.

Investigators fear five or six other young girls may also be involved.

Six men were charged last Friday with aggravated sexual assault of the children. Arrest warrants have been issued for two other men.

Sheriff's investigators discovered that during the past four years, the four girls, ages 9 to 13, have participated in sex acts with numerous men.

They were rewarded for their favors with new clothes, makeup, camera film and a trip to Astroworld amusement park in Houston, about 90 miles south.

"It was like prostitution, but they didn't know it," said

Houston Police Vice Officer Steve Andrews, who was asked to assist in the investigation.

One of the girls, age 12, was found living in a camper of a pickup truck with a man, his wife and three young children.

Robert Ziriak, a 47-year-old construction worker from Baytown, was charged with sexual abuse and held in the Liberty County Jail on \$50,000 bond.

Ziriak contends the girl was only a baby sitter, said Liberty County Sheriff E.W. "Sonny" Applebe.

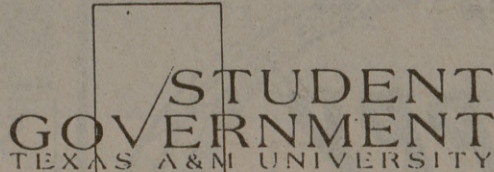
"But the girls say he has had sex with them and once even whipped his wife in an effort to force her to participate," Applebe said.

Also charged are William Ralph Casey, 26, Lonnie James Goodson, 22, both of Hoop-and-Holler; Thomas Van Hook, 31, of Sour Lake, Armando Alvarez Mendoza, 64, of Houston and Valentine Rivera, 57, of Hitchcock. All are jailed on bonds ranging from \$25,000 to \$35,000.

When the girls' father, who is unemployed and living on disability, was told that his daughters had had oral sex with a man who lives in their subdivision, he cut off their hair as punishment.

"Their father had taken a pair of scissors and lopped big chunks out of their long, dark hair," said Lognion. "What was left stood out about an inch from the scalp."

The father has since checked into a mental hospital for evaluation, investigation said. The girls are now in foster homes.



STUDENT GOVERNMENT NEEDS YOUR HELP!!! OPENINGS NOW IN THE STUDENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE.

STUDENT RELATIONS IS A NEW COMMITTEE IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF STUDENT GOVERNMENT UNDER THE COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION.

THIS COMMITTEE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN STUDENT GOVERNMENT AND TEXAS A & M STUDENT BODY. APPLICANTS MUST BE IN BRYAN/COLLEGE STATION DURING BOTH SUMMER SESSIONS.

APPLICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE IN ROOM 221 OF THE PAVILION. THEY ARE DUE BY 5:00 P.M. ON JUNE 14.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
COME BY 221 PAVILION
OR CALL 845-3051



Subscribe to the Real World

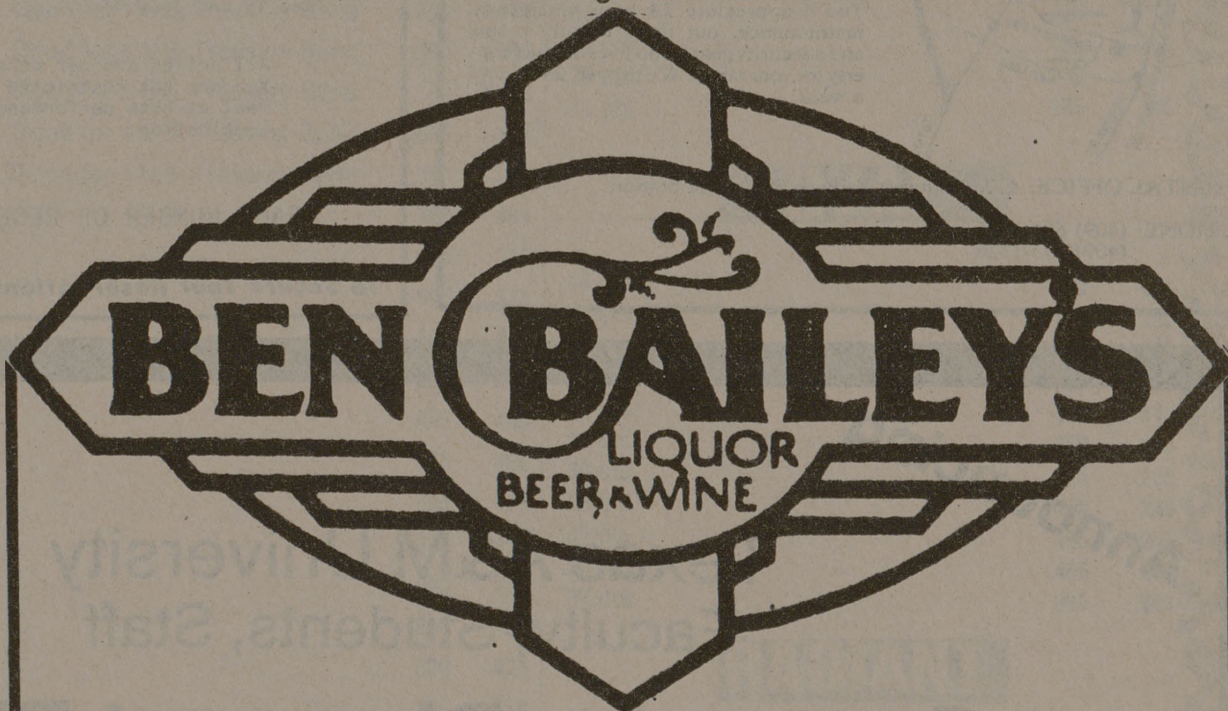
School is theories and facts. Out in the real world, you have to put what you learn in college to practical use. *The Houston Chronicle* can help.

Turn to *The Chronicle* and get news and information that will help you today, in your classes and soon, in the real world.

Subscribe now and save. Get *The Houston Chronicle* delivered seven days a week for the summer semester at a discount.

Texas A & M Students, Faculty and Staff
Only \$11.00 for delivery June 4—August 16
Call 693-2323 or 693-7815 to subscribe

Houston Chronicle
Houston's leading information source



We've Moved Come See Our New Store 817 Texas

In front of Red Lobster across from new main entrance

Seagram's

1.75 liter
80°
\$10.99



&



2 liter
99¢

Same low prices, just a new look
Monday-Saturday 10-9pm