

Richards claims opponent avoids issues relevant to state, campaign

AUSTIN (AP) — Democratic gubernatorial candidate Ann Richards said Wednesday that allegations she used illegal drugs more than 10 years ago are irrelevant and accused her opponent, Attorney General Jim Mattox, of refusing to talk about issues important to the state.

Kelly Fero, a campaign spokesman for Mattox, said the attorney general welcomes the opportunity to debate Richards on the issues and cited Tuesday's televised debate in Dallas which Richards bypassed.

"He stood in front of the firing line," Kelly said. "Where was Ann?" Richards said she did not attend because of a previous commitment for an Austin fund-raising event which conflicted with the debate.

The two candidates, who meet in an April 10 runoff election, agreed on one issue: Despite their avowed opposition to apartheid they will not

return large contributions from a contractor who is purchasing steel from South Africa in a state-funded bridge project.

James D. Pitcock Jr., president of Houston-based Williams Brothers Construction Co. has donated \$25,000 to Richards' campaign and \$15,000 to Mattox.

"He's been a very good friend to me, and I like him very much," Richards said. "He's a nice man. We should do whatever we can do to bring about economic sanctions for South Africa."

Fero said that before Mattox accepted the contribution, Pitcock assured him the money was not related to his business dealings with South Africa.

After voting absentee at Justice of the Peace Precinct 1, Richards criticized Mattox, who during the televised "debate" said he has signed

statements from several people who said they saw Richards use illegal drugs.

"He doesn't deserve my attention or my response," she said.

"Every day it's a new rumor, it's a new allegation, it's a new charge or it's a nasty television spot," Richards said.

Richards, a recovering alcoholic, has refused to answer yes or no to the question of whether she ever used an illegal drug.

She has repeatedly said that she has not had an alcoholic drink or taken a mood-altering drug in the past 10 years.

"I think it is totally irrelevant," Richards said. "No one has questioned that I have been the best state treasurer in the state of Texas. I have carried out my duties above reproach."

Fero said the drug question is im-

portant because if Richards used illegal drugs while a public official, she was breaking the law she had sworn to uphold.

Fero said Mattox would not release the names of those who signed the statements alleging they saw Richards use drugs, because the people have requested confidentiality.

In another political development, Democratic State Treasurer candidate Nikki Van Hightower said her runoff opponent, San Antonio County Judge Tom Bowden, has a history of fiscal mismanagement of the county.

Van Hightower, the Harris County Treasurer, cited a newspaper article that quoted Bowden saying, "After this year I will not be county judge and I will recommend the court raise taxes each year seven percent."

Republican abortion plan draws criticism

AUSTIN (AP) — The traditionally anti-abortion state Republican Party on Wednesday said abortions should be allowed in some instances, drawing fire from some Democrats and pro-choice advocates who called the stand a political ploy.

"This plan puts our words into action and our philosophical principles into concrete legislative proposals," said state GOP Chairman Fred Meyer.

But critics called the "legislative action plan" a smokescreen to cloud the anti-abortion stands of two top-of-the-ticket Republicans, Sen. Phil Gramm and gubernatorial nominee Clayton Williams.

"They only believe in abortion if the campaign of their candidate is in danger," said state Sen. Hugh Parmer, D-Fort Worth, who is challenging Gramm in the November general election.

"We certainly welcome any intent on behalf of the Republican Party to better represent pro-choice Republicans, but this is an effort to keep the debate off the fundamental question, which is, who makes these personal decisions, women or politicians?" said Phyllis Dunham, executive director of the Texas Abortion Rights Action League.

Anti-abortion activist faces trespassing trial for Austin clinic protest

AUSTIN (AP) — A trespassing trial has begun for anti-abortion activist Rex Moses, who was arrested last May during a demonstration at an Austin abortion clinic.

The trial before Travis County Court-at-Law Judge Wilford Flowers is in connection with a May 6, 1989, demonstration at which members of Moses' Austin Rescue organization blocked entry to the Reproductive Services clinic in Austin.

Moses founded Body of Christ Rescue in Corpus Christi last year. Moses' organization previously was based in Austin under the name Austin Rescue.

Moses also faces three other

criminal complaints in connection with protests staged by Austin Rescue in 1988 and 1989.

In opening statements and testimony Tuesday, defense attorney Richard Munzinger tried to raise questions about whether Moses was within earshot of police and clinic managers who advised demonstrators to leave the property.

Assistant County Attorney Kate Kelley-Miller showed television news footage of a demonstration in which an Austin police officer used a megaphone to advise hymn-singing demonstrators they were trespassing and would be arrested if they did not disperse.

Under the state GOP proposal, women would be allowed to have an abortion before the fetus is 20 weeks old.

After 20 weeks, medical tests would be required to determine if the fetus could live outside the mother's womb. If so, a woman could only get an abortion if her husband would otherwise be in danger.

The plan also calls for a prohibition on abortions that are based on the sex of the fetus, and requiring parental consent before an abortion can be performed on a minor.

Other provisions would increase criminal penalties against a person who harms an unborn child through assault of the mother; require that abortions be performed in safe clean facilities; and require abortionists to be licensed by the state.

Meyer said the plan, which would set an abortion deadline up to 20 weeks after pregnancy, would be supported by Republican candidates

for the next four years. He denied the plan contradicts the GOP state platform to work for a constitutional ban on abortion. Meyer said Gramm, who has been under fire from Parmer over abor-

Court order halts sauce distribution

FORT WORTH (AP) — Some folks claim sauce is sauce, but the barbecue sauce at Stagecoach Bar-B-Q is enough like the sauce at the Spring Creek Barbecue that a judge has ordered Stagecoach to stop serving it.

The temporary order also puts Londell Fisher, newly of the Stagecoach, out of work for a while, because Fisher, the former manager at Spring Creek, promised he wouldn't compete with his former employer for three years.

Fisher left Spring Creek in December to work at the Stagecoach, which is owned by his uncles. Spring Creek filed suit shortly afterward, claiming Fisher took Spring Creek's secret barbecue sauce with him when he left, a violation of the non-compete contract he signed when he joined Spring Creek.

Stage Coach countered that its barbecue sauce was similar but not the same.

Syndication war unresolved between Dallas newspapers

HOUSTON (AP) — The publisher of the Dallas Times Herald testified Wednesday that the paper lost thousands of readers and advertising strength when the rival Dallas Morning News struck a deal for 26 syndicated columns and comics that had appeared in the Times Herald for years.

Publisher John Buzzetta was the first witness in the Times Herald's \$33 million anti-trust suit against the Dallas Morning News over transfer of the Universal Press Syndicate columns.

After the Morning News' parent company, A.H. Belo Corp. formed a joint venture with the Kansas City-based syndicate last year, UPS canceled the Times Herald's contract for the features.

"I was shocked," Buzzetta testified Wednesday, referring to the cancellation notice. "I'd never seen something like this happen."

"Here, in one fell swoop, I was going to lose some of the best features this newspaper had published for years and years. I thought I was going to have some serious losses."

Buzzetta tallied the circulation losses at 9,000 to 10,000 daily readers and more than 15,000 on Sunday.

The Times Herald had been posting increases in circulation before Universal Press canceled the features, said Buzzetta, who bought the paper in 1988.

But afterward the paper began to lose "loyal readers" faithful to such features as Dear Abby, Erma Bombeck and Doonesbury, which were moved to the Morning

News.

"If you lose features, it means you lose some loyal readers, and circulation goes down," he said.

If circulation declines, advertising follows, he said. The newspaper gets 90 percent of its revenue from advertising sales and 10 percent from newspaper sales.

Court documents indicate the Morning News attracts 60 percent of the circulation and newspaper advertising in Dallas.

Buzzetta said a newspaper economist hired by the Times Herald quantified the damage of losing the features at \$33 million.

The Times Herald also is seeking unspecified punitive damages from Belo and the Morning News.

In opening statements, Morning News attorney maintained the Times Herald has made circulation gains since losing the features.

Buzzetta said some of the circulation losses were recouped through special promotions, particularly a lottery. But he said the promotions have been expensive — costing \$1.5 million so far — and do not have the same lasting power to attract and keep "loyal readers" that features have.

The Times Herald attorneys said they will try to prove the Morning News conspired to lure the features from the Times Herald in hopes of destroying newspaper competition in the Dallas market.

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