



BAPTIST PRESS

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81-61

Secretary Files Harassment Suit Against Brotherhood, SBC

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--A 43-year-old women secretary for the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission filed a \$3 million lawsuit April 9 in federal court in Memphis against the commission, three of its executives, and the Southern Baptist Convention, charging sexual harassment and defamation of reputation.

Barbara (Mrs. Robert) Minor, a nine-year employee of the Brotherhood Commission, also named as defendants James H. Smith, commission executive director; Norman Godfrey, associate executive director, and David Haney, director of the Baptist men's division.

As an employee of the Baptist men's division, Minor contended Haney declined to promote her to division level secretary last summer after she refused to respond to what she described as a request for sexual favors on behalf of a friend.

The suit contends Haney, Godfrey and Smith made public statements questioning Minor's mental stability and morality, causing her grave embarrassment and humiliation.

The suit alleges the "defendants are employed by the Southern Baptist Convention in various positions at the Brotherhood Commission and that the defendants are officials, representatives, agents, servants or employees of the Southern Baptist Convention."

Speaking for the commission, Smith denied the charges, explaining that he, his staff and trustees had tried for six months to corroborate the sexual harassment claim but found no basis.

Minor filed a similar complaint in September 1980 with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. After hearings, the EEOC took no position in the case and issued Minor, at her request, a letter of right to sue.

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Committee On Boards
Report Is Available

Baptist Press
4/13/81

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The report of the Southern Baptist Convention committee on boards, commissions and standing committees has been released by the committee chairman, Claude Kirkpatrick.

The committee, composed of two representatives, one in a church-related vocation and the other a layperson from 26 state conventions, recommends persons to serve as trustees of 22 denominational organizations.

The recommendations include appointment of 138 new trustees and reappointment of 91 persons to second terms.

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Baker Says Constitution
Allows Stricter Gun Control

By Stan Hasteley

WASHINGTON (BP)--In the aftermath of the March 30 assassination attempt on President Reagan by a lone gunman armed with a .22-caliber "Saturday night special," a Baptist constitutional lawyer says the U.S. Constitution does not forbid Congress from controlling the right to keep and bear arms.

John W. Baker, general counsel to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, realizes his opinion is contrary to arguments by the powerful gun lobby. But the veteran attorney and political scientist says the Second Amendment "as originally drafted emphasized the relationship of the militia to the bearing of arms."

The Second Amendment reads: "A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

The lavishly financed gun lobby, spearheaded by the National Rifle Association, contends the amendment gives every citizen the constitutional right to own and use guns without government interference.

Baker's analysis expresses the opposite view. "The Second Amendment guarantees a collective rather than an individual right," he says.

His argument is based on the admittedly small volume of federal case law relating to the volatile subject of the power of Congress and state legislatures to control, even ban, firearms.

Baker notes that in its only decision dealing with that precise subject, the Supreme Court in 1939 "affirmed that the right to keep and bear arms is dependent on involvement with the militia." The 1939 ruling upheld a section of the National Firearms Act requiring the registration of sawed-off shotguns.

The high court declared then: "In the absence of any evidence tending to show that possession or use of a (sawed-off shotgun) . . . has some reasonable relationship to the preservation or efficiency of a well regulated militia, we cannot say that the Second Amendment guarantees the right to keep and bear such an instrument."

In 1942, the First Circuit Court of Appeals upheld another provision of the National Firearms Act, declaring "the federal government can limit the keeping and bearing of arms by a single individual as well as by a group of individuals" so long as such possession or use of weapons has no "reasonable relationship to the preservation or efficiency of a well regulated militia." The Supreme Court, in an action the following year, allowed the decision to stand.

As recently as 1978 the high court likewise let stand a ruling by the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals that the purpose of the Second Amendment was indeed to preserve the effectiveness and assure the continuation of a state militia.

Baker points out that since the 1939 ruling Congress has adopted numerous laws placing stricter limitations on the receipt, possession and transportation of firearms and has repeatedly entertained proposals for national registration and outright banning of their ownership.

That such efforts will continue and even intensify in light of the eighth attempt in this century to shoot a president is beyond question. Also certain is that the issue will continue to be bitterly debated.

But if Baker's view gains ground, one of the chief arguments of the gun lobby may well be cut out from under it.

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Choral Director
Paul Green Dead

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4/13/81

HOUSTON (BP)--R. Paul Green, former director of the Baptist Hour Choir, Southwestern Seminary faculty member and chairman of the fine arts division of Houston Baptist University, died April 3 of cancer. He was 59.

Green's service at Immanuel Baptist Church in Tulsa, beginning September 1945, distinguished him as the first Southern Baptist fulltime minister of music west of the Mississippi River. He went to Houston in 1963 after three years as recording and choral specialist for the church music department of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn.

Green is survived by his wife, the former Wanda Houser, three sons and four grandchildren.

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Hargrave Academy
Damaged by Fire

Baptist Press
4/13/81

CHATHAM, Va. (BP)--A fire has heavily damaged the roof, attic and top floor of the four-story main building at Hargrave Military Academy, an institution of the Baptist General Association of Virginia.

Some 100 firemen battled the blaze for more than two hours before bringing it under control with the aid of an aerial truck from the Danville Fire Department. To extinguish the blaze, firemen pumped water from a nearby pond and the school's swimming pool.

Six cadets who used fire extinguishers to battle the blaze were treated for smoke inhalation and released from a Danville hospital.

The building houses most of the classrooms, dormitory space and the administration of the 485-student school.

Cause of the fire has not been established, and estimates of the damage have not been made.

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CORRECTION: In Baptist Press story mailed April 9 entitled "House, Senate Consider Nonprofit Postal Hike," the postage bill for the Texas Baptist Standard in 1975 should be \$459,000, not \$59,000 as listed in graph 10.

Thanks,

Baptist Press

Man, 77, and His Bride
Join Mission Service Corps

By Tim Nicholas

Baptist Press
4/13/81

SCOOBA, Miss. (BP)—A 77-year-old man and his bride of nine months are on their way to Hawaii from Scooba, Miss., to serve two years in the Mission Service Corps.

Edward and Mary Farr will work in the First Southern Baptist Church of Pearl Harbor in Honolulu in church administration, religious education, evangelistic visitation, literacy and Woman's Missionary Union work.

Farr had been a widower since 1959. "I had prayed for 21 years that the Lord would reveal to me (a new wife)," said Farr. When he met Mary Wallace while both were in Israel in 1979, he thought, "This is a strange phenomenon, a person with lights in her eyes." He compared meeting her to Moses seeing the burning bush. "He turned aside to see what was happening," he said.

A traveling companion for Mrs. Wallace, a widow, told Farr that "Mary thinks God is going to put a rope around a man's neck and lead him to her." Farr said he knew the rope was around his neck.

After only one quick hand squeeze during the Holy Land trip, and about 50 letters each afterward, Farr drove to Memphis to see Mary, 59, after the Mississippi Baptist Evangelism Bible Conference in February 1980.

He said he wanted both of them to get God's answer to their future, but he traveled with a ring in his pocket.

Farr talked with his prospective bride about mission involvement and found ready agreement. Her experience teaching people to read with Laubach method and teaching English to Laotians helped the couple win their appointment to the Hawaiian church where the congregation ministers to many language groups. Mission Service Corps places volunteers at work with career missionaries for one or two years service.

Farr said he "came into the world to be a missionary." He said his mother told him late in life that she had dedicated him to the Lord even before he was conceived. As a small child he had even been given up by a doctor for dead and, after being promised to God by his mother, began breathing again.

He helped start 12 churches and has preached under (and built) brush arbors, in homes, stores, courthouses and Methodist and Presbyterian churches (to Baptists).

He was the first white teacher under a federal court order to teach at an all black school in Greenville where he taught for five years and preached at Bogue Baptist Church. And he has taught in Manpower programs in three Mississippi junior colleges.

Farr first retired at 65 from Westside Baptist Church, Macon, which he had reopened twice, and is thriving today. Then he retired again at 70 from Bogue. "I've been supplying, and preaching and getting married since," he said with a straight face. Going to Hawaii places Farr one step closer to what he feels is his destiny. "I've known for many years," he said, matter-of-factly, "that I was going to preach on my 100th birthday."

Here is a copy of the resolution passed by the Baptist Public Relations Association at its annual meeting in Birmingham concerning its support of the ministry of Baptist state newspapers. The resolutions committee was composed of Theo Sommerkamp, Linda Thompson and Bill Boatwright.

ON BAPTIST STATE PAPERS

Whereas, Baptist state papers render an unparalleled ministry of information, interpretation, inspiration and communication to church members in the Southern Baptist Convention;

Whereas, Baptist state papers are funded by state conventions but are an integral part of Cooperative Program agreements developed over the years between state conventions and the SBC, so that state papers are a vehicle for local, state, national and world news;

Whereas, the Southern Baptist Convention has no national newspaper among its hundreds of periodicals, but has always relied on the Baptist state papers collectively to fulfill that role;

Whereas, increasing pressure from many quarters and of many kinds is being felt by the Baptist state papers;

Therefore, be it resolved, that we as members of the Southern Baptist Public Relations Association, holding our 1981 meeting in Birmingham, do declare:

That the state papers fulfill a function in Southern Baptist life that no other periodical or periodicals can and do fulfill;

That the state papers must maintain both a prophetic and a supportive role in the denomination;

That the editors of these state papers must be left free to select, edit, delete, arrange and publish such materials as would seem suitable and timely for each issue;

That we commend the state papers for the constructive support they give to their local conventions and to the SBC;

~~That to the fulfillment of their obligations, state papers must from time to time~~
publish controversial news, and must sometimes offer constructive criticism in editorial comments;

That we support the right of the Lord's people to hear the truth spoken in love; and we support the premise that it is better to publish controversial news than to suppress it, or allow harmful rumors to circulate, especially those generated by destructive critics of our denomination and its churches;

That we encourage the editors of these state papers to strive for journalistic excellence, and for integrity in exercising the freedom to interpret all subjects that pertain to the Christian life;

That we believe the state paper should and can serve as an inspirational, unity-building, love-projecting publication;

That the freedom of the press is as cherished a Baptist principle as freedom of the pulpit, both being vital and essential.