

One Nation Under God

How a Supreme Court ruling may change the Pledge of Allegiance and classroom routines in public schools

By Scott Hurff and Jessica Pritchard
News Editor and Life Editor

A San Francisco-based federal appeals court decision reached in June 2002 about the constitutionality of the Pledge of Allegiance may soon have national repercussions for all children who attend public school.

The Supreme Court will examine the Ninth Circuit Court ruling that declared the daily recitation of the Pledge unconstitutional due in part to the inclusion of the phrase "under God." The Court made the announcement of its intentions Oct. 15 and a ruling is expected by June.

"I'm surprised the court took the case," Katy Harriger, professor of political science, said. "There are certainly bigger fish to fry in the area of separation of church and state."

Visiting professor at the Divinity School James Dunn expressed a similar opinion. "There are serious church-state problems now a days and 'under God' in the Pledge is not one of them," he said.

Dunn worked in Washington for 22 years and has served on the Board of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State for 18 years. "I just don't think it's that important," he said.

Dunn listed the issues of vouchers for parochial school and the recent incident involving a statute of the Ten Commandments outside a courthouse as more serious church-state issues.

In a move that surprised many across the nation, Justice Antonin Scalia removed himself from the case - called a 'recusal' in the legal world - without explanation. *CNN.com* reported that it was in response to a request by the original plaintiff in the lawsuit after Scalia condemned the original ruling openly as part of National Religious Freedom Day. Justice Scalia's recusal could allow for a 4-4 vote on the decision, which would keep the ninth District Court decision standing.

In accepting the California case, which could permanently dictate the course of religious inclusions in government institutions, the Supreme Court has the potential to change the daily routines of millions of children across the country.

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James Dunn
Visiting Professor, Divinity School

The decision in the California case did not declare the actual verse "under God" unconstitutional but rather said that recitation of the Pledge in classrooms was unconstitutional due to the fact that children are impressionable, *USA Today* reported.

New classroom procedures regarding the Pledge in the nine western states under the jurisdiction of the Ninth Circuit Court have been put on hold in pending the Supreme Court's decision.

If the California decision is upheld it would raise questions of patriotism and national heritage and focus more debate on whether the Pledge actually violates the First Amendment's ban against laws "respecting an establishment of religion."

At the heart of the debate is California native and atheist Michael Newdow who sued his daughter's elementary school over the inclusion of "under God" in the Pledge, alleging that the teacher-led recitation violated his daughter's religious freedom.

Despite the Ninth Circuit Court's decision last June, the Supreme Court has twice previously upheld the constitutionality of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Harriger said she felt that the man who wrote the original version of the Pledge would have been appalled by the inclusion of "under God." She said this is because the purpose was to unite those who recited it regardless of their religious beliefs and celebrate that we were united civilly under a democratic government.

"Under God was added in the 1950's as a way to distinguish us from the Soviets," Harriger

said. The original version simply stated "one nation, indivisible."

Rabbi and professor of English Andrew Ettin said that he was in grammar school and objected when the phrase was added.

"On my own initiative I refused to say that phrase then, even though I think I was the only one in my class to do so," he said. "Although a couple of my classmates noticed that I did not recite those two words, no one ever challenged me and no one in authority ever intervened."

While the court is not expected to rule until the end of the current session, Dunn said he thought a less than clear-cut yes or no would be issued.

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Harriger said she thought the court would uphold the Pledge in the same way they have allowed general statements about God.

Ettin did not speculate as to how the court would rule.

Both Ettin and Harriger said they felt "under God" should not be a part of the Pledge.

"The main reason is that I distrust the intermingling of belief in God with

patriotism, loyalty and national pride," Ettin said. "It should not be the state's function to make me profess to a belief in God, whether I have such a belief or not."

Sophomore Caitlin Judd said she also felt "under God" didn't have a place in the Pledge.

"I don't think it's a necessary part, it's pretty irrelevant to the statement on the Pledge of Allegiance," she said.

College Democrats Treasurer and sophomore Whitney Doub said she thought recitation of the Pledge containing "under God" had the potential to make children that practice a religion other than Christianity uncomfortable.

"I understand that no one is actually forcing them to say it, but peer pressure and group conformity can go a long way like that," she said.

Charlie McCurry, a junior chairman of Republicans, would tend with those the use of "I like to country upon the

Despite the differing opinions of the two political groups on campus, McCurry said the issue was not a partisan one given the fact that both President Bush and Senator Tom Daschle (D-South Dakota) had condemned the earlier court ruling.

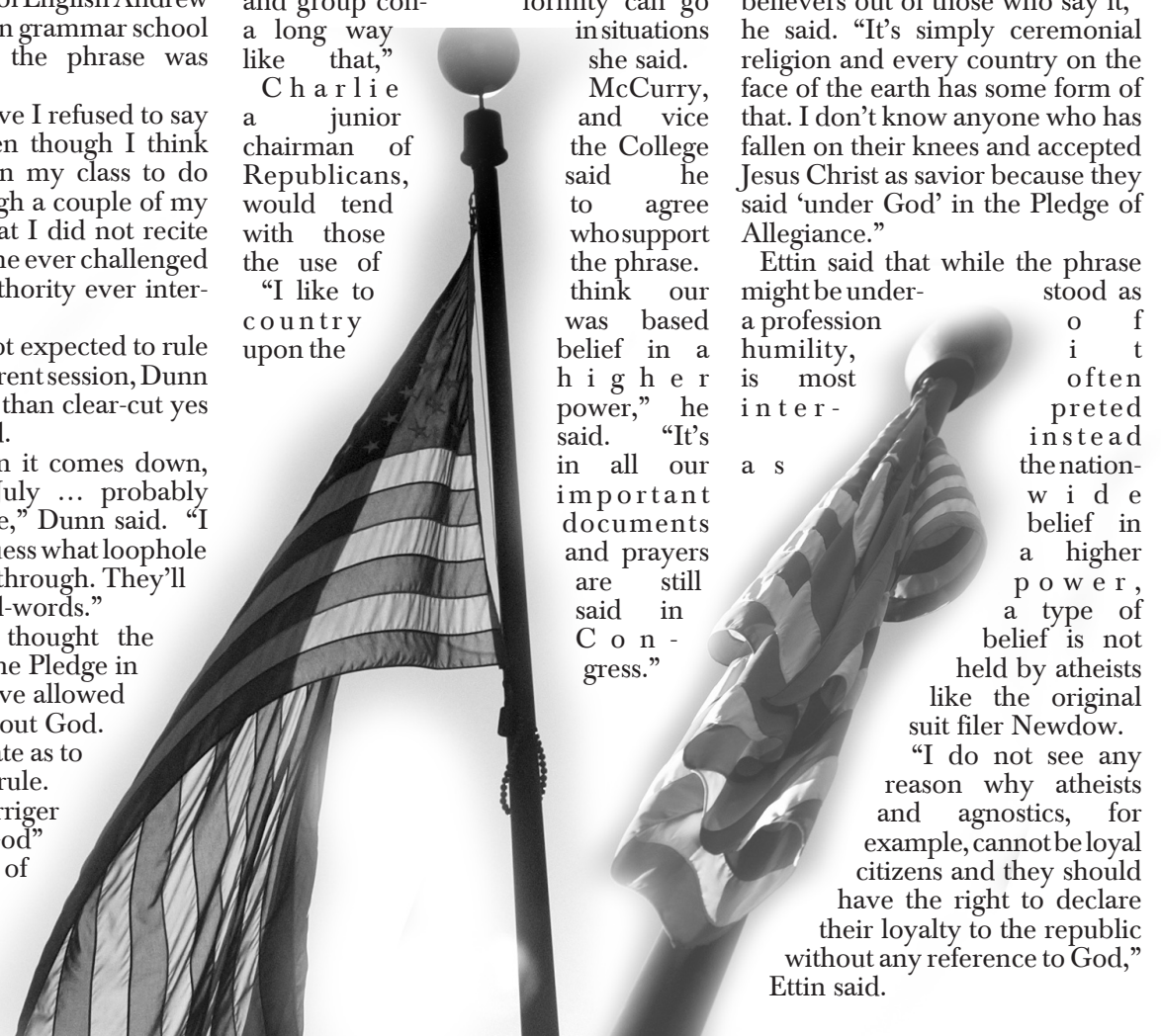
Campus Crusade for Christ refused to comment on the article, stating, "We prefer not to take a stand as an organization on the issue."

Dunn said he was not wasting his energies on defending or opposing "under God" and mentioned adding an s to "God" or making the G lowercase.

"(The phrase) does not make believers out of those who say it," he said. "It's simply ceremonial religion and every country on the face of the earth has some form of that. I don't know anyone who has fallen on their knees and accepted Jesus Christ as savior because they said 'under God' in the Pledge of Allegiance."

Ettin said that while the phrase might be understood as a profession of humility, it is most often interpreted instead as the national wide belief in a higher power, a type of belief is not held by atheists like the original suit filer Newdow.

"I do not see any reason why atheists and agnostics, for example, cannot be loyal citizens and they should have the right to declare their loyalty to the republic without any reference to God," Ettin said.



...one Nation, UNDER GOD, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice...

Photo By Jen Holland Graphic By Scott Hurff

Position created to increase campus scholars

By Alex Reyes
Assistant News Editor

Tom Phillips, director of merit-based scholarships, will shift responsibilities when he begins the newly created position of director of university scholars next month.

For 21 years, Phillips has been responsible for recruiting students to the university and advising them as upperclassmen when they apply for fellowships and scholarships. His responsibilities will now focus primarily on assisting upperclassmen with scholarships and fellowships such as the Rhodes, Fulbright and Truman scholarships.

Phillips said he is excited about the position but realizes he has a lot to learn. He hopes to increase the number of scholarships and fellowships for which students apply.

"Once students enroll in the university, I will follow not only capable students who come to Wake, but all students who have done very well," Phillips said. "Typically, Wake students apply for six or eight different post-graduate scholarships, but this number should be around 20 or 30," he said.

Phillips said the university needs a stronger connection between different post-graduate fellowships and scholarships and current students who are thriving and at the top of their respective classes, regardless of major.

He will begin his new responsibilities within a month, employing the help of many who will assist him throughout the transition process.

"It is a win-win-win situation for Phillips, Wake Forest and the students. The university will hopefully have more students who win these awards and the students will benefit as well. That's the bottom line."

Sam Gladding
associate provost

"I will basically have two jobs here this fall, which will be busy, but not unmanageable," Phillips said.

Provost William Gordon and Sam Gladding, associate provost, created the position with the idea of having a "one-stop shop" for post-graduate scholarship and fellowship information.

"Before, we delegated faculty to be responsible for advising students about these fellowships, but this will offer the chance for a more central person to be in charge," Gladding said.

Gladding said everyone will benefit from the creation of this position, and he is enthusiastic about the undertaking.

"It is a win-win-win situation for Phillips, Wake Forest, and the students. The university will hopefully have more students who win these awards and the students will benefit as well. That's the bottom line," he said.

Previously, faculty members volunteered to help

students to apply for these scholarships and fellowships. Phillips said faculty who have been helping advising on a volunteer basis have agreed to continue to help.

Peter Siavelis, associate professor of political science, was formerly the principal adviser for applicants of the Fulbright program.

"I will still be participating on the selection committee, but Phillips will take over the responsibility of the preparation of the candidates," Siavelis said.

Siavelis said it is beneficial to have consolidated all fellowship and scholarship applications to one person.

"Phillips knows the most about who the students are and which ones will be qualified for which scholarships," Siavelis said. "He will be able to act as one central clearing house and find the best fit between the type of student and type of fellowship," he said.

Siavelis said the new position is a good idea because it will allow one individual to focus on cultivating the students applying. He said it will help to prove the university's record in landing these prestigious scholarships and fellowships.

Katy Harriger, a professor of political science, is the former principal advisor for the Truman, Rhodes and Marshall scholarships. She said she will continue to assist possible Truman nominees on their applications if they seek her advice and will also assist with conducting mock interviews.

Harriger said the trend around the country has been to have either one person or a whole office

work full-time on preparing students for these scholarship competitions. The university has been advising students in a decentralized approach by having different faculty members responsible for different scholarships.

"The problem for students who might be competitive for more than one of these was that they had to go around to different people or committees with different processes, and it was quite complex to negotiate," Harriger said. "Dr. Phillips can be a central source of information about all these opportunities ... and encourage them along the way much more effectively that various and dispersed faculty members," she said.

Phillips's office will most likely move from the Welcome Center to Reynolda Hall in the spring.

Phillips said he feels strongly about having someone work with the recruitment of students for new scholarships. The university is in the process of searching for a new director of merit-based scholars and will conclude interviews this week.

"I admire the university for, in a sense, putting my salary toward this effort," Phillips said.

Phillips said he will most likely continue to teach one course per semester, but his only remaining role in recruitment will be his position on the selection committee for the Reynolds, Carswell and Gordon scholarships.

"This is an effort that I think is long overdue," Phillips said. "We have the talent to be competing nationally, and it's my job to bring that out in the next 10 years," he said.

University police warn campus in wake of thefts

By David Chace
Old Gold and Black Reporter

Campus police have issued a warning to the university concerning several recent and attempted thefts.

Several residents of Luter Residence Hall spotted a suspicious man walking around the halls Oct. 19. Two residents reported seeing this man attempt to steal wallets from their rooms before he

was spotted and fled the scene.

In two different rooms in Luter - one in the A wing and one in the B wing - residents spotted an arm reaching around the frame of their doors attempting to grab property off a bureau, according to University Police Chief Regina Lawson. When spotted and confronted, the man retracted his arm and fled down the hallway.

Two different descriptions of suspects have been reported.

The suspect from the A wing incident is described as a black male, approximately 20 years old, around 190 pounds, and five feet 10 inches tall. This suspect wore dark pants and a white t-shirt with an Atlanta Falcons logo. The suspect from B wing is a black male, approximately 20 years old, around 200 pounds, and six feet two inches tall, wearing dark jeans and a gold t-shirt.

During the morning of Oct.

20, another suspicious man was spotted in several private offices in Reynolda Hall. That morning, personal property was stolen from one unattended office of a staff member.

Lawson said before the theft was discovered, several staff members from the second and third floors of Reynolda reported a suspicious person in their offices. According to Lawson, the man allegedly walked into offices that were pre-

sumed empty, but he was discovered after he entered.

"He would engage in conversation with the people who saw him," Lawson said.

"He would smile and tell them that he must have walked into the wrong office and was looking for somebody else."

This suspect is described as a black male around 30 years old. Approximately five feet ten inches, around 160 pounds with

a slim build.

He was wearing a dark, casual shirt and pants and was carrying a backpack.

The incidents in Reynolda and Luter are currently presumed as unrelated. Police are looking for anybody who can give a more clear description of any of the three suspects.

Students may call ext. 5591 if they wish to report any information regarding the thefts.