

# Update

## Mormon Judge and ERA

A motion has been filed by the U.S. Justice Department to have U.S. District Judge Marion Callister, based in Boise, disqualify himself from a case because he is a Mormon. Judge Callister, a regional representative of the LDS Church, is scheduled to hear a suit filed by Idaho and Arizona against the General Services Administration over the Equal Rights Amendment.

The suit is intended to clarify the constitutionality of the GSA's power to not recognize the rescision of ERA ratification by five states, according to a recent UPI article. The suit also challenges Congressional authority to extend the ERA's ratification deadline.

Stuart E. Schiffer, an assistant U.S. attorney general, said in the motion, "There exists a reasonable question concerning the ability of the court to render an impartial decision in this matter." The motion cites the Church's firm opposition to the ERA and last year's extension of the ratification deadline.

National women's groups have protested the possibility of the Mormon judge's hearing the case. According to the UPI article, both Judge Callister and spokesmen for the Mormon Church have declined to comment on the motion. But conservative Mormon congressman George Hansen of Idaho has blasted what he calls "blatant apparent religious bigotry" on the part of the Justice Department.

"This motion constitutes a reprehensible assault upon the rights of responsible and active citizens to freely practice religion without penalty or abridgement of constitutionally guaranteed rights," said Hansen. He further suggested that the motion might set a precedent for actions against "Catholics, Jews, and Protestants" holding judicial or other offices.

## Genealogy and Hemophilia

The genealogical records meticulously kept by most Utah families and deposited in the LDS Genealogical Archive are proving a valuable resource for medical researchers.

Robert M. Fineman, director of the University of Utah Medical Center's genetics programs, recently announced that his staff is tracking carriers of hemophilia using these records. "We need large, well-defined pedigrees, a minimum of family migration and illegitimacy," he reported. The Church records are ideal.

University of Utah scientists say hemophilia in Utahns can now be traced to its source—pioneer women who settled in the state in the mid to late 1800s.



## Mormon Dancer Dies

Sally Rand, whose fan dance scandalized visitors at the 1933 World's fair in Chicago, died August 31 at age 75. A convert to Mormonism, her funeral was held in an LDS ward house in Glendale, California.

She entered show business as a child, appearing in circuses and later in silent films, but her appearance at the Chicago World's Fair brought her national recognition. In 1934 she scandalized St. Louis with a Lady Godiva horseback ride. "It was my form of social protest," she said according to the UPI story covering her death. "People were starving during those depression days and here the aristocratic women were spending a thousand dollars for a dress to go to a party."

She appeared at fairs, nightclubs, and on the burlesque stage. At age 61 she was arrested for dancing nude behind

the five-foot ostrich fan which became her trademark. She celebrated her seventieth birthday with a fan dance at the Los Angeles Music Center and was still performing such rousing songs as "You Gotta Get a Gimmick" from the musical "Gypsy" last October.

She had joined the Mormon Church in June 1978, baptized by her son Sean who had joined the Church at her urging.

## Zero Population Growth

The Salt Lake City chapter of Zero Population Growth recently released a pamphlet titled "Zero Population Growth and Mormon Doctrine" written "by Mormons for Mormons." The pamphlet attempts to resolve the differences between scientists (population growth must ultimately cease because global resources are limited) and Church leaders (if possible a couple should have a large family) with a lengthy discussion of the doctrine of priesthood infallibility.

## Historic Structures

The Hotel Utah was recently placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Built between 1909 and 1911 in the modern Italian Renaissance style of the day, the hotel is owned by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Recent expansion of the hotel did not damage the exterior integrity of the structure since the original molds were used to duplicate ornate exterior details.

Also slated for restoration is the historic Mormon Fort in downtown Las Vegas. The state of Nevada will add \$60,000 in state funds to a \$40,000 federal grant to refurbish the adobe structure, the only remnant of the larger fort built by Mormon settlers in the 1850s. The fort will then become a museum.

On a sadder note, the Utah State Historic and Cultural Sites Review Committee made a formal recommendation in June to the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places that the Logan temple be removed from the Register. During recent modernization by the Church, the entire historic interior of the building was removed and totally replaced with modern fixtures and furnishings. The arboretum surrounding the building was also torn out to provide for expanded parking. The final decision by the National Register is still pending.

## Teenage Suicide Rate

The suicide rate among Utah teenagers has led the national average and consistently increased over the past 15

years according to an article by Douglas D. Palmer of the *Deseret News*.

Quoting Utah Bureau of Health statistics, the suicide rate among Utah males aged 15 to 19 compared to national averages was as follows:

1963-1967, Utah 9.2 per 100,000 population, national 6.1; 1968-1972, Utah 12.8, national 8.8; 1978-1977, Utah 16.1, national 12.2.

The corresponding rates for women in the same age groups were:

1963-1967, Utah 2.1, national 1.9; 1968-1972, Utah 3.4, national 2.9; 1973-1977, Utah 4.1, national 2.9.

#### Women's Rights

Ezra Taft Benson, president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, recently spoke to a gathering in Los Angeles and said that women have been "elected" by God to be mothers and homemakers.

He cautioned women against entering jobs in the business world where their "godly attributes are diminished and they acquire a quality of sameness with man." He maintained that "more often than not the demand for equality means the destruction of the inspired arrangement that God has decreed for man, woman, and the family."

President Benson praised the example of Susanna Wesley, mother of 19 children and wife of Methodist church founder John Wesley, saying that raising her children "required the skill, competence, intelligence, and ingenuity far above any career, and in the eternal perspective is the essence of glorious fulfillment."

As if in counterpoint, *Washington Post* reporter Judy Mann (August 10, 1979) profiled Sonia Johnson, chair of Mormons for ERA, and her persistent support for the ERA despite consistent Church counsel that ERA is a moral issue, that it will destroy the family, and that members of the Church should fight against it. "The minute I heard that letter," recalls Mrs. Johnson, "I just said to myself this is not true. I cannot go along with that." But her struggle, she confessed, has not been easy. Her own parents have been ostracised because of their daughter's outspoken crusade, and many others who have spoken out in support of women's rights have likewise suffered.

"I love these women in my church," says the mother of four and fifth generation Mormon who lives in Sterling, Virginia. "I can't tell you how much I'm one of them. One of the risks I run all the time is that I will become estranged from them, but I just feel I

have to do this for their sake, for my daughter's sake, for my mother's sake."

Besides demonstrating the role of the Mormon Church in the anti-ERA fight and dramatically highlighting support by some Mormons for the amendment, Mrs. Johnson emphasized that an important goal of her organization is to establish a dialogue with the leadership of the Church, a dialogue which has not yet materialized. "The leaders of our church won't talk to us... There is no dialogue on this subject in the Church except through the newspapers. It's not the healthy way."

In a recent article in the Front Page section of *Utah Holiday Magazine* (September 1979), Linda Sillitoe reviewed reasons for this note of sadness in Mrs. Johnson's comments in the *Post* interview. She had received notice just prior to the interview with Judy Mann that she would not be allowed to meet with President Kimball during his projected trip east in September or during Mrs. Johnson's visit to General Conference in October. Because, she was told through her regional representative Don Ladd, they each "understand the other's position" and have "nothing to say to each other."

President Kimball's personal reactions to the controversy on women's rights were the focus of the *Utah Holiday* article which detailed the background behind the interview by AP reporters David Briscoe and William C. Wertz with President Kimball in early June. President Kimball's views were not

encouraging to supporters of the women's movement. In the interview he said that a woman who asks for "authority to do everything that a man can do and change the order and go and do men's work instead of bearing children—she's just off her base."

When pressed on the subject of people who do not go along with Church pronouncements such as the one on the ERA, he said, "He should be very careful. For instance on ERA, if the Church is opposed to it because it is immoral, then he ought to be very, very careful... because the Church is led by strong men and able men... so we feel that we are in a position to lead them properly."

According to the *Utah Holiday* article David Briscoe's personal impression after the interview was that the "homosexual issue" is a major factor in President Kimball's opposition.

Linda Sillitoe's article also explored the impact that such strict interpretations by the prophet would have on women who have been persistently hoping that his personal views would be more understanding of personal dilemmas. In addition to Sonia Johnson's Mormons for ERA, the article also describes the efforts of a group of older women who supported the ERA "as good Mormons" for years and have attempted to correspond with President Kimball regarding their sudden alienation on the issue. The article ends on a somber note with the bared feelings of one woman, "Sometimes I feel like a motherless child!"



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