

COMMENTARY

Christmas Without Dad

Now Christmas is the
saddest time
Around our house each year
Because there is an empty
place
For one that can't be here.

To decorate the Christmas
tree
Won't even be the same,
And on the gifts beneath
the tree
We'll always miss his name.

We won't forget his
smiling eyes
And how he loved the fuss
And all the things that
Christmas meant,
Though he can't be with us.

Now Christmas is the
saddest time
Since Dad has passed away,
But in our hearts, Dad
will
be here
On every Christmas Day.

Peter West

DO YOU PLAY AN INSTRUMENT?

DO YOU LIKE TO SING?

DO YOU WANT TO COLLABORATE WITH OTHER MUSICIANS AND SINGERS?

DO YOU WANT TO START A BAND?

IF YOU SAID YES TO ANY ONE OF THESE QUESTIONS, THEN HELP US START A NCWC MUSICIANS CLUB.

For more information please
contact:

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Or stop by the Leon Russell
Chapel Wednesdays from
7:00 - 9:00pm

Big Food

By: Christina Amos

The consumer lawyers that broke new grounds with the tobacco industry have set their sights on another popular, but controversial target: Junk food, or what they call "Big Food." These lawsuits have been filed contended that children did not know junk food, particularly McDonald's and other fast food chains, made them fat and put them at risk for other health problems, such as diabetes and high blood pressure. These cases are the first of their type to arise, and are probably going to stem a series of cases alike in the future. Too many, obesity from fast food is simply a matter of common sense, but to others, an issue involving a violation consumer fraud laws by misinforming, or not informing the public at all is at hand. These cases are likely to bring about a huge debate on not only an individual's ability to make their own decisions, but also if such individual can construe good judgment without being informed of effects that ordinary people should assume or understand. "You may not be able to prove that somebody got fat because of a particular product, but you can prove that the companies may have misrepresented, by omission, what is in their foods" one professor of law at George Washington University puts it.

In the two states of California and Texas, where respectively 98 percent of students are out of shape and nearly 800,000 students are overweight, school officials have already started taking the junk food away from their cafeterias. In February, the 52,000-student district in Oakland, California banished soda, candy, caffeinated drinks and other products from their schools. Despite the fact that these students now have healthier eating choices in the cafeteria, more kids are sneaking off campus to get junk food, says the district food service manager, Amy Lins.

Furthermore, in two other states, New York and Florida, class-action lawsuits have been filed claiming that processed foods have misled consumers about their little nutritional value. One supporter for the fast-food industry says that laziness, not junk food, is behind the threefold increase in the number of overweight children in the last 30 years. Many other representatives for the fast food industries say that they eat from these fast food chains everyday and it is perfectly healthy, in moderation that is. "Although lawsuits attacking junk food do not say a specific food is responsible for obesity, they say food companies are liable for some health risks because of mislabeling," says one reporter for the New York Times. One class-action suit, filed in New York last month, accused the company that makes Pirate's Booty popcorn of mislabeling. The popcorn was recalled after an independent group found that it had far more fat than the label indicated.

The corporation that has been long withstanding in the legal news is McDonalds, with lawsuits involving hot coffee spills and rat heads to the most up to date obesity-causing food cases.

Recently, McDonalds settled a class-action lawsuit for \$10 million because the company had not informed people that its french fries were cooked in oil that contained beef extract. This was a class-action lawsuit, meaning that this particular case could represent other persons in the United States that "(i) have consumed french fries or hash browns from or at McDonald's Restaurants in the United States since July 23, 1990; and (ii) have concerns, objections, or dietary restrictions, whether ethical, moral, religious, philosophical, or health-related, with respect to the consumption of beef or meat." As part of the \$10 million settlement, McDonald's has agreed to: "(i) donate \$10 million to charitable organizations in the following percentages: vegetarianism (60 percent); Hinduism and/or Sikhism (20 percent); children's nutrition and/or children's hunger relief (10 percent); and promotion of the understanding of Jewish law, standards and practices with respect to Kosher foods and dietary practices (10 percent); (ii) issue an apology; and (iii) establish an advisory board to make reports and recommendations to McDonald's about dietary restrictions that apply to various types of vegetarians, as well as guidelines for companies who market to vegetarians."

The most current obesity case that McDonalds has faced began with a lawsuit filed by lawyer Samuel Hirsch in a Manhattan federal court that later turned into a class-action suit, thus could represent anyone that claims to have developed problems and/or obesity from eating McDonald's food. Hirsch alleged that McDonald's violated New York state's consumer fraud statutes by deliberately misleading consumers into thinking their cheeseburgers and other products were healthy and nutritious. McDonald's asked for a dismissal on grounds that the case is "frivolous." One lawyer for McDonald's says "People don't go to sleep thin and wake up obese, the understanding and comprehension of what hamburgers and French fries do has been with us for a long, long time." Judge Robert Sweet ruled in this case that consumers could not hold McDonald's responsible for their excessive consumption of its burgers. Although the case was dismissed, there were problems that the judge found in the plaintiff's original argument in which he granted the plaintiff the option of filing an amended complaint within 30 days addressing these problems. "If plaintiffs were able to flesh out this argument in an amended complaint, it may establish that the dangers of McDonald's products were not commonly well known and thus that McDonald's had a duty towards its customers," Judge Sweet wrote. In Judge Sweet's ruling, he stays, "Where should the line be drawn between an individual's own responsibility to take care of herself and society's responsibility to ensure others shield her? The complaint fails to allege the McDonald's products consumed by the plaintiffs were dangerous in any way other than that which was open and obvious to a reasonable consumer." The plaintiff's lawyers have every intention to amending their complaint and re-filing it in the federal court in 30 days.

Watson Is Jefferson Pilot Professor

Source : Public Relations

Dr. Richard L. Watson III, professor of history at North Carolina Wesleyan College, has been named Jefferson Pilot Professor for the 2003-2004 academic year. The honor is the highest that Wesleyan bestows upon a member of its faculty. It carries a stipend and requires the professor selected to research a topic on which he will present at a public lecture in the spring.

The award was established in 1981 by the Jefferson Pilot Life Insurance Company to recognize tenured faculty members who have distinguished themselves as teachers, scholars, and members of the Wesleyan community. The recipient is nominated by a committee of the faculty, recommended by the dean of the College, and appointed by the president.

This is the second time that Watson has been chosen as the Jefferson Pilot Professor. He first received the honor for the 1986-87 academic year.

Watson earned his B.A. degree from Duke University and his master's degree and Ph.D. from Boston University. He has taught African, European, and Afro-American history at Wesleyan since 1972. His research focuses on 19th century South African history, particularly on the roles of missionaries and slavery. This research has produced a number of articles in professional journals and a book, *The Slave Question: Liberty and Property in South Africa*, published in 1990. Currently he is studying the changes South African society underwent when slavery was abolished, and is interested in comparing that experience to the same period in the United States after the Civil War.

2003 December Graduates Dinner

Source: Jetta Baker

A dinner will be held on Wednesday, December 10 at 7:00 p.m. in the Dunn Center for the Performing Arts for the 2003 December Graduates. Invitations have been sent to the December graduates participating in Commencement. If you are traditional day student and live off campus, please stop by the Office of Student Life, located in the Hardees Building, to pick up your invitation. There will be a drawing for extra Commencement tickets at the December 10 dinner for the graduates attending the event. Please RSVP to the Student Life Office by December 5 to confirm your attendance.