

# Mother Claims Lesbian Daughter Unfit to Raise 2-Year-Old

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
RICHMOND, Va. — Gay rights advocates are watching closely a potential landmark case in Virginia, where a judge this week will consider whether a woman may retain custody of her lesbian daughter's 2-year-old son.

It is a highly unusual custody battle because it pits a nonparent against a mother whose only alleged parental shortcoming has been her sexual relationship. A trial is scheduled for Tuesday in Henrico County Circuit Court.

Sharon Bottoms, 23, lives with her partner, 27-year-old April Wade. Kay Bottoms, 42, contends that her sexual orienta-

tion makes her daughter unfit to be a mother.

"The question is whether a parent should be disqualified because of sexual orientation or lifestyle," said Donald Butler, Sharon Bottoms' lawyer. "We don't think the law should allow people to lose a child on that basis."

A different answer to the question Butler posed comes from Anne Kincaid, spokeswoman for the Family Foundation, a conservative Virginia group that says it has 30,000 members.

"Is it discrimination based on sexual orientation or is it child protection based on the mother's sexual behavior?" she said.

"It looks like there would be a compelling state interest to protect the child. ...

"It's important to note the difference between sexual orientation and sexual behavior," Kincaid added.

"Historically, society views homosexuality as immoral behavior, and that's always been a criteria for removing a child from the home."

Abby Abinanti, legal director for the National Center for Lesbian Rights in San Francisco, said she knew of no other case quite like this one.

"There have been cases where a child was raised by two lesbians, the birth mother dies and the partner is challenged for cus-

tody," she said. "The courts have struggled with that and have come out with different rulings."

Usually, she said, the person seeking custody is the other parent. In Bottoms' case, the father and ex-husband is not involved.

Henrico County juvenile court Judge William G. Boice awarded custody of Tyler Doustou to the boy's grandmother last March, relying on a 1985 Virginia Supreme Court ruling that said a parent's homosexuality was a legitimate reason for losing custody.

That case, however, involved a mother who sued her gay ex-husband for custody

of their child.

"This case is an entirely different set of facts," Butler said.

Sharon Bottoms, who has had limited visitation rights since Boice's ruling, and Wade decided to fight for custody.

Their phone number is unlisted, and Butler says he has advised his client not to talk publicly about the case before the trial.

Kay Bottoms' lawyer, Richard Ryder, did not return a reporter's repeated phone calls.

However, he told the Richmond Times-Dispatch in an interview last May that "the lesbian relationship is detrimental to the child and will get more so in the future."

# Israeli Muslims Protest Against PLO Accord

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
JABALIYA CAMP, Occupied Gaza Strip — Wall slogans signed by Islamic activists scream for Jewish blood and prayer leaders espouse the gun as the only way to achieve a Palestinian state.

But Islamic activists in groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad appear divided about whether bullets or just violent words will defeat the plan to start Palestinian autonomy in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank city of Jericho.

A minority argues that a guerrilla campaign against Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization is the only way to destroy the Jewish state.

The others, while not ruling out guns entirely, think the limited scope of the plan combined with the corruption that has long plagued the PLO will sink Yasser Arafat in Gaza.

They then could use their already-formidable strength in the fetid alleyways of the refugee camps to win at the ballot box.

"Seven years ago the Islamic groups had few supporters in Gaza.

"Now they have at least 50 percent," said Dr. Saud Shawa, a 37-year-old veterinarian and Hamas supporter.

"In the end the only realistic alternative is an Islamic state."

A few scuffles and scattered gunshots are the only violence to date. But threats hover everywhere.

Wall slogans, the Gaza equivalent of a town crier, scream: "We don't recognize Gaza and Jericho and we will continue slaughtering the Jews until the last drop of our blood."

While Israel and the PLO have agreed on the plan's details, expected recognition between Israel and the PLO is delaying its signing.

Authorities are bracing for violence both from Islamic activists and from militant Jewish nationalists who think the plan betrays the biblical vision of Greater Israel.

Arab rejectionists attack the delay in discussing the status of Jerusalem, whose eastern, Arab sector fell to Israel in the 1967 Middle East war.

They want it as their capital because it contains Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third-holiest in the faith, and key secular institutions.

"Now everything has changed, even the name of the PLO. Now it's the Gaza Liberation Organization," said Shawa.

Islamic activists know they are battling three factors. First, Arafat retains hero status; a new brand of shampoo released this week in Gaza was even named after his wife, Soha.

Second, Israel's sealing the territories last March means the unemployment rate among the 750,000 Gazans hovers around 70 percent.

There are high hopes that peace will bring development jobs.

Third, no one wants Israeli soldiers around.

But more than an Israeli withdrawal, the agreement spells out that the Palestinians will stop attacks on Israel. That goes against the basic strategy of Islamic groups.

"The Islamic opponents established a clear red line. They said, 'Go ahead and sign the agreement. We are not going to cut off your hands,'" said Adnan Salim, a former activist.

"But in return you are not going to stop us from continuing our armed struggle."

The return of the 400 deportees exiled to the border with Lebanon since last December, expected to start this week, will boost Islamic activists' cause.

Islamic leaders said they will get support from other movements in Algeria, Egypt and Iran.

## HOUSING

FROM PAGE 1

the 13th.

Once male residents are reassigned, the housing department will be able to tell students in temporary housing where they will live for the rest of the year, Bradley said.

But male residents will not be forced to move if they prefer to stay in their current rooms, he said.

"If one doesn't want to go, then it doesn't happen," he said. "All the people in the suite have to agree (to move)."

The housing department will try to meet specific requests from the men in Hinton James, Morrison and Ehringhaus to make moving closer to the main part of campus more attractive, Bradley said.

"If somebody wants to stay in a building or stay as roommates, we'll try to be accommodating," he said. "We'll have to wait and see how many (students) take us up on the offer."

## COFFEE SHOP

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Perhaps it is the food that attracts such a crowd. Carolina Coffee Shop features gourmet favorites such as chicken cordon bleu and London broil as well as more mainstream fare like sandwiches and omelets. And of course the menu lists a variety of coffees too — lattes, cappuccino, espresso, cafe au lait, flavored coffees and even coffees with liqueur.

Homemade desserts also delight the taste buds.

Eighty-eight-year-old Karl Preston Williams, a longtime employee of neighboring Julian's, fondly remembers the apple walnut pie a la mode. "It was real good and real thick," he declared, smacking his lips comically.

Erin Cram, a junior from Asheville, enjoys the atmosphere of the Carolina Coffee Shop. "It's more like a restaurant than a coffee shop," she said. "It's a very upscale place, but I like it."

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