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UNC doctor will aid judge in breast implant suits

Barbara Hulka and two other doctors will study the effects of breast implants.

BY MELISSA STEELE
SENIOR WRITER

U.S. District Judge Sam Pointer recently teamed a UNC doctor with two others as part of a scientific advisory committee to determine the safety and health risks of silicon breast implants.

Dr. Barbara Hulka, a Kenan professor in epidemiology at UNC's School of Public Health, Dr. Betty Diamond of the Albert Einstein School of Medicine and Dr. Peter Tugwell, who works at the University of Ottawa in Canada, make

up the scientific team.

Hulka said it is not the committee members' job to make personal judgments on whether or not they think the implants are safe.

Instead, they intend to read scientific literature on the subject and give their interpretations of the material to Pointer to aid him in his decisions on various cases.

"I don't plan to review anyone's testimony or take anyone's side," Hulka said. "I'm just interpreting scientific literature that has been peer reviewed."

"I'll just review data, try to decide what the data says, and tell (the judge) what my interpretation of the data is (based on) my particular discipline."

Hulka said all the candidates for the advisory board were chosen by a nomi-

nating committee and had to go through a lengthy screening process. It was important that the chosen candidates not have a conflict of interest that might affect their judgement on the issue of breast implants, she said.

"It is fairly uncommon in the U.S. for scientists to work for a judge," Hulka said.

"But I would not have taken on the assignment if it were to work for anyone other than the judge. I'm interested because it is very important in terms of health affects."

Hulka has not had any experience dealing with or researching the risks and effects of silicon breast implants, and it was her inexperience that the nominating committee was looking for.

"That's why they wanted me," she

said. "They didn't want people who had already formed opinions." Hulka does, however, treat and research breast cancer as well as other forms of cancer.

"I've spent a lifetime career in science, and I'll apply presumably everything I've learned," she said.

"(Breast implants) are a big issue, and a need for understanding the science of them is great."

The three members of the committee have yet to meet together with Pointer. Following this meeting, the process of researching and reading scientific literature will get under way.

Hulka said once her job as a committee member begins, her main goal is to collaborate with the other two doctors and help the judge from a scientific standpoint.

Professors donating books to African university's library

BY SHENG LEE
STAFF WRITER

Students in the United States complain about the prices of their textbooks on a regular basis, but students in many other countries would consider themselves fortunate to have textbook prices to complain about.

That's what Gary Gaddy, coordinator of statistical consulting at the Institute for Research in Social Science, saw during his summer visit to the University of Buea in Cameroon, Africa, where textbooks are difficult to find.

Gaddy said Buea's professors had to give very detailed notes because most

students had no textbooks. "Getting hold of a book is as difficult as getting hold of the money to buy a book," he said.

In an effort to combat the problem, Gaddy asked UNC professors to contribute books to send to Buea's newly-built library. "I knew the need was there, and I knew they would want it and appreciate it," he said.

Gaddy said the faculty and students at Buea greatly appreciated the three boxes full of books he and his wife left for them.

He said he had acquired about 2,000 additional books to send to Buea.

"I have all kinds of books from all kinds of disciplines," Gaddy said.

He said the book project was practi-

cally running itself.

"After I got back from Africa, people wanted to hear about my trip and I would mention to them that I was collecting books to send to Africa, so they would give me all these books," he said.

Gaddy said sociology Professor Richard Simpson donated 300 books, the department of math donated about 500 books and the School of Journalism and Mass Communications and the Kenan-Flagler Business School donated hundreds of books.

The process of acquiring books has been very easy, and the only problem is figuring out a way to ship the books to Africa, Gaddy said.

He said someone had suggested shipping the books by military planes. Gaddy said he would talk to the United States ambassador in Cameroon to figure out a way to get the books to Buea.

Some professors who contributed books said they thought Gaddy's efforts would serve as priceless gifts to students and professors in Buea.

Michelle Hunt, an assistant professor at the business school, said U.S. students were lucky to have textbooks to buy.

"Students don't realize it's a privilege to be able to buy books, even if they cost \$75," she said.

Anyone interested in donating books can call Gaddy at 962-0516.

LICENSE

FROM PAGE 1

Powell said computerizing drivers' information and photographs would make many types of fraud difficult. For example, drivers who are stopped sometimes say that they have forgotten their licenses and give police officers the names, addresses and birthdays of other people.

If officers have pictures of license holders in their computers, they can determine if drivers that they stopped are lying, Powell said. "We want everybody — bank tellers, people who take your checks and law enforcement — to feel secure that when you hand them a driver's license they are getting the real thing."

Powell said storing drivers' photographs on computer would also assist out-of-state law enforcement officers needing information about people with North Carolina drivers' licenses.

Randy Knight, deputy director of the N.C. Alcohol Law Enforcement Agency, said he was hopeful that the new cards would cut down on the use of fake identification. "I have boxes and boxes of (fake identification cards). We keep them to learn how people are trying to falsify identification." Knight said while the new cards would certainly cut down on fake identification, he doubted they would ever be entirely eliminated. "Somewhere out there is always someone who is going to try to circumvent the law."

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