

# N.C. court judgment favors student renters

BY BECCA DENISON  
STAFF WRITER

Students recently won a victory in the fight between renters and local neighborhoods who seek to exclude temporary residents.

An almost two-year legal battle involving UNC students who rented a Chapel Hill house was decided March 7 by the N.C. Supreme Court.

The court ruled that students could not be restricted from renting the house, despite Winding Ridge Homeowners Association's claim that its covenant stipulated that the houses were meant for single-family use only.

Covenants, which are agreed upon by all homeowners, regulate subdivisions and neighborhoods that adopt them.

"When people buy into certain subdivisions, they know the subdivisions will be, say, family-oriented," said Gordon Brown, who represented the homeowners.

The N.C. Supreme Court ruled that the language of the covenant restricted the kind of building which could be constructed on the property but that the lan-

guage was too vague to suggest a restriction on who could ultimately live there.

Following that reasoning, the court did not rule on whether the students could be considered a single family.

The students' behavior was not a factor in the case; the students had been good neighbors, Brown said.

"These young people, these students at University of North Carolina, conducted themselves in an absolutely exemplary fashion," he said. "They represented themselves and the University well."

While Winding Ridge homeowners did not have any specific issue with the students, they did not want to set a precedent which would allow the neighborhood to include rentals, Brown said.

Chapel Hill resident Lee McIlwain helped lead the 2007 effort to designate the Mason Farm/Whitehead Circle neighborhood, located behind the Kenan-Flagler Business School, as a neighborhood conservation district.

He said an increase in the

number of rentals was one reason behind that effort. "If it became mainly a rental neighborhood, we thought the character would change a lot."

Becoming a conservation district means the neighborhood has certain building restrictions meant to preserve its character.

McIlwain said that most students were good neighbors and that the conservation district was not enacted to keep students out but rather to discourage all rentals.

In addition to Mason Farm/Whitehead Circle, five other Chapel Hill neighborhoods have been designated as conservation districts.

Chapel Hill Town Council member Bill Thorpe said he does not favor neighborhoods that try to exclude students.

He added that the town council can opt to keep exclusions from happening.

"We can say we don't want this in our town," he said. "We're not going to allow it."

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# Junior tapped for Ray Memorial Spirit Award

BY MIA MOORE  
STAFF WRITER

Junior varsity cheerleader Jeremy Crouthamel was more than willing to spend his time this past summer in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

There, he taught English to children in an orphanage.

It was because of that and other acts of service that the English and Spanish double major became the first recipient of the Jason Ray Memorial Spirit Award.

"He's a tremendous young man," said UNC cheerleading coach Brown Walters. "It's amazing how much of his time he gives selflessly to others."

The spirit award was established to remember and honor Jason Ray, the former Rameses mascot who was killed a year ago today while traveling with the UNC men's basketball team at the NCAA tournament.

"I just feel really honored," Crouthamel said.

Crouthamel was one of about five people nominated for the award.

A committee then read the applications and selected the winner based on who best demonstrated the attributes that Ray embodied.

"The department was looking at how we might best honor Jason and keep his legacy alive," said John Blanchard, senior associate athletics director for student athlete services.

"We thought that this was a really good way to do that and a good way also to show our appreciation



DTHALLIE MULLIN

The parents of Jason Ray, the former mascot who was killed last March, present the first Jason Ray Memorial Spirit Award to Jeremy Crouthamel.

to the different spirit squads."

The criteria for the award included enthusiastic representation of the University, active participation in the spirit squad and heavy involvement in the community.

"This is an award that recognizes excellence in the classroom, service to the community and service to the school," Walters said. "He was nominated because of all the things he's involved in."

Crouthamel is involved in UNC's Dance Marathon, where he has served as a committee member and student leader. He also tutors at a local high school.

"I think this award is an incredible way to honor an incredible guy. (Ray) made a huge impact everywhere he went, and it's the least we can do as a program to honor his memory," he said.

Charlotte and Emmitt Ray, Jason Ray's parents, presented Crouthamel with the award at halftime of the

men's basketball game against Florida State University on March 4.

Ray is also being remembered by his fellow mascots, who carry on his memory every time they don the Rameses suit.

This year's mascots, juniors Brad Lockwood and Tyler Treadaway, are conducting a search for students interested in wearing the mascot suit.

Remembering and honoring the legacy of the former mascot was one of the reasons behind the installment of the spirit award.

"This award is our way to demonstrate that we are doing all we can to ensure that Jason will not be forgotten," Blanchard said.

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