

Need a lawyer? U.S. has an abundant supply

By Chris Lindsey
Staff Writer

A dramatic increase in the number of

people entering the legal profession and skyrocketing costs for legal assistance have raised questions about the motives of the modern attorney.

With the number of lawyers doubling since 1980, many clients have expressed fears that lawyers desperate for business may encourage the filing of unnecessary lawsuits to ensure a flourishing demand.

"You have a saturated market, and only about 10 percent of lawyers are serving the needs of the public," said Teresa Meehan-Rudy, coordinator of education for the Organization for American Legal Reform.

Since 1980, the number of lawyers licensed in the United States has grown to 777,000, according to a U.S. Bureau of Labor report. Critics of this growth maintain that too many young attorneys enter the field for financial reasons, Meehan-Rudy said.

But many attorneys defend their field and argue that the drastic increase in entrants to the legal profession is the result of an ever-growing consumer demand for assistance.

"If we had too many lawyers then there wouldn't be a demand, and they wouldn't be hired. Lawyers don't file lawsuits, people do," said Diane Danis, director of the communications division for the American Bar Association.

An increase in the number of laws and government regulations creates a need for more trained attorneys, she said.

Attorneys' fees also continue to rise with the influx of new lawyers. Increasing fees make it difficult for average citizens to obtain adequate representation, said UNC law professor Daniel Pollitt.

"We need some sort of judicial care like Medicare," Pollitt said. "Most of the people in America do not have access to legal services."

Even critics of the legal profession agree positive results can be attained if more citizens gain access to the growing pool of attorneys.

The U.S. legal system could be restructured to delegate some legal tasks or smaller cases away from attorneys, Meehan-Rudy said. This change could help streamline courts and rescue them from a growing backlog of cases, many of which represent small disputes.

Allowing legal practitioners to handle more cases would force the price of legal services down, Meehan-Rudy said. Legal practitioners can perform many of the same duties as licensed attorneys but currently cannot try cases.

"The average citizen doesn't have access to cheap legal service," Meehan-Rudy said. "I don't think the answer is putting a cap on lawyers but allowing non-lawyers to handle more legal cases."

Although attorneys' fees continue to climb, public defenders and prosecutors aren't reaping many benefits. The American Bar Association recently reported that only corporate and private attorneys have seen major growth in their incomes.

The rising number of lawyers may be indirectly influencing prices of consumer goods. Many corporations, continually faced with lawsuits, have been forced to hire expensive lawyers, thus leaving the consumer with the responsibility of paying the bill.

"It's a trickle down effect — eventually it gets to the consumer," Meehan-Rudy said. "When lawyers sue big companies and win larger settlements, the price gets down to the consumer."



United Nations to send 50 troops to Yugoslavia

UNITED NATIONS — The Security Council on Wednesday approved sending a 50-man advance team of military officers to Yugoslavia to help cement the latest truce.

The council said the full 10,000-member peacekeeping force would be deployed only if the cease-fire holds.

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has begun dispatching the officers already, and U.N. officials said Wednesday the first soldiers are expected in Yugoslavia by the end of the week.

European Community monitors have been in Yugoslavia since July, but on Wednesday the EC suspended its monitoring operations because of a federal air force attack on an EC helicopter, in which all five military observers aboard were killed.

U.N. legal experts said the secretary-general already had a legal mandate to send the peacekeepers, and that the council's approval was not required.

But diplomats said the council wanted to endorse the secretary-general's plan and to urge all Yugoslav factions to honor their commitments to a cease-fire and peaceful resolution of the conflict.

Libya wooing Russian nuclear scientists

MOSCOW — A Russian scientist said Wednesday that Libya has offered high-paying jobs to his colleagues at Moscow's top nuclear institute, providing new evidence that the Soviet Union's collapse could spread nuclear technology.

Western leaders have expressed mounting concern that the political breakup of the Soviet Union and its crumbling economy could lead to the transfer of nuclear weapons — or scientists capable of building them.

Vyacheslav Rozanov, deputy chief of the thermonuclear department at Moscow's Kurchatov Institute of Atomic Energy, said Libya had offered jobs to at least two of his co-workers.

Both scientists turned down the jobs and tempting \$2,000-a-month salaries — very high by Russian standards, Rozanov said. But he added they might say yes to more money next time.

The demise of the Soviet Union has raised fears worldwide that its technology could be bought by the highest bidder, including Libya, Iraq and other countries that are trying to develop nuclear weapons.

— The Associated Press

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Campus Calendar

THURSDAY
5:30 p.m. Korean-American Student Association will meet in 206 Union. Officers will meet at 5 p.m. Attendance is mandatory for ski trippers.
5:45 p.m. Baptist Campus Ministry will have a meal and program at the Battle House.
7 p.m. Carolina Fever will meet in 109 Fetzer to distribute tickets for the Clemson game.
8 p.m. Arab-American Association will meet in 210 Union.

ITEMS OF INTEREST
Il reste des places a la Maison Francaise si vous aimez parler la langue, boire du bon vin, et rencontre des bons amis, donnez un coup de fil: 933-0945.

The Black Ink will meet at 4 p.m. Jan. 13 in the Black Ink office (Union Suite 108) to discuss plans for appointing a new editor.
Join the Social Dance Club at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 13 in the Women's Gym. Men and women are invited.
Auditions for the musical "Broadway Melodies II" will be held from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Jan. 13-14 in the Union Auditorium. Singers and dancers are needed.
Carolina Students' Credit Union will hold an interest meeting at 7 p.m. Jan. 14 in T7 New Carroll. Campus Y will hold elections for co-presidents, co-treasurers and secretary on Feb. 4. Applications are available at the Y and are due at 5 p.m. Jan. 23. Candidates must attend a meeting at 4:30 p.m. Jan. 16.

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