

Avis Meyer Lawsuit

You may have read or heard about a lawsuit the University filed recently against communication professor Avis Meyer. Dr. Meyer is a long-time faculty member and for many years was the faculty adviser to The University News, SLU's student newspaper. The University sued Dr. Meyer because he willfully engaged in trademark infringement in seeking to use the names of Saint Louis University and its student newspaper for his own purposes. The University News has been continually published under that name as the student newspaper of Saint Louis University since 1921. It is clearly identified with the University and continues to be published by Saint Louis University on campus as a student newspaper. As the publisher of the U News, the University intervened to protect itself and the paper. Dr. Meyer had no right to attempt to incorporate the University's trademarks and intellectual property.

The University has been forced to spend over \$18,000 in legal fees to protect its interests, and SLU still has not received from Dr. Meyer any assurance that he won't again illegally try to incorporate the University's trademarks and intellectual property. As a result, the University is seeking a restraining order against Dr. Meyer to stop further attempts to take University property, and it is seeking from him reimbursement for the expended legal fees. In these challenging economic times when SLU must stretch every dollar to fund scholarships, salaries and other operating expenses, it is a shame that the University has to use its resources to defend its trademarks and intellectual property from Dr. Meyer.

Dr. Meyer has publicly intimated in print and on radio that the lawsuit is an attempt to influence the editorial coverage of the student newspaper. Nothing could be further from the truth. As a matter of fact, the changes last spring to the charter for The University News have produced a much better newspaper, and one that is, by the way, no less critical of me and my administration! The student staff is now being advised by full-time staff member and professional journalist, Jason Young. In addition to teaching, training and encouraging the student writers and editors, Jason has also instituted secure financial systems to avoid violations of University policy and accepted audit practices. (Last year, \$19,000 in uncashed checks from subscribers and vendors were found in a desk drawer in the U News offices in BSC.) But let me be very clear: at no time since I arrived at SLU in 1987 has anyone from the administration told the editors of the student newspaper what stories to cover or what positions to take. While the University is the publisher of The University News, all of us in the administration respect the right of student journalists to decide the editorial content of the newspaper.

Again, let's be clear: it is because Dr. Meyer tried to willfully take the University's name and trademarks that there is currently a lawsuit. Saint Louis University did not publicize the fact of this lawsuit: Dr. Meyer did. We have commented publicly only when contacted by The University News earlier this year, after the paper had talked to Dr. Meyer.

If Dr. Meyer had tried to incorporate the name of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch or the St. Louis Business Journal, for example, I believe he would be facing the same kind of legal action. Dr. Meyer has every right to start an independent newspaper any time he wishes, but he doesn't



have the right to use Saint Louis University's trademarks and intellectual property in doing so.

The Cardinal Newman Society

As many of you know, Pope Benedict XVI will visit the United States this spring. During his visit, the Holy Father will address the presidents of the American Catholic colleges and universities.

Unfortunately, the excitement about the Pope's visit is already being marred by a misinformed and inaccurate mailing by the Cardinal Newman Society. It is the latest attack on America's Catholic colleges and universities by the Cardinal Newman Society and its president, Patrick Reilly. For years, Reilly has used distortion, inaccurate information and scare tactics to attack many fine Catholic colleges and universities in his effort to raise money. Reilly continues to attempt to dictate the academic agendas and students' social life at Catholic institutions such as SLU. Reilly would like to have the ability to approve every commencement speaker and honorary degree recipient on all Catholic college and university campuses in the United States of America. His organization openly challenges the academic freedom that all American colleges and universities cherish.

In his latest salvo, Reilly has mailed a thinly veiled fundraising solicitation to more than 100,000 Catholics in which he accuses our nation's Catholic colleges and universities of being a "breeding ground" for "challenging the Pope."

We are far past the time for Reilly's distortions and half-truths to be left unchallenged. He and his organization have repeatedly launched narrow-minded attacks on SLU, Marquette, Loyola Chicago, Loyola Marymount, USF, Detroit-Mercy, Notre Dame, Georgetown and many other fine Catholic universities. Until now, we have ignored these unfair assaults on American Catholic higher education, but in light of this latest crass attack, I feel it is necessary to alert you to the deleterious activities of the Cardinal Newman Society. The presidents of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU) and the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) also are responding to these attacks.

If you receive one of the solicitations from Patrick Reilly and the Cardinal Newman Society, I urge you to see it for what it is: an attempt to raise money by unfairly attacking our American Catholic higher education institutions and the work all of us do to provide the best possible educational experience for our students.

I thank you for allowing me to share my views on these very important matters. I hope I was able to offer a fresh, clearer perspective and dispel some rumors and falsehoods.

And now, for the rest of the news...

Come and have fun: I hope everyone will join me on Thursday, April 10, for the dedication and grand opening of Chaifetz Arena. I know that many are excited to get inside and look around the new SLU arena. Like you, I have marveled at the state-of-the-art arena beginning from a hole in the ground broken on August 28, 2006 to a monument that will be a fitting