

Judge’s ruling halts enforcement of SF 496

By Ryan Brown

The Iowa Legislature just received an “F” for its sweeping educational bill Senate File 496.

I am glad that federal court judge Stephen Locher has finally put an end, at least temporarily, to the madness of a law that has sent educators and librarians into a frenzy across the state of Iowa.

SF 496, which was signed by Gov. Kim Reynolds in May, requires that all school library books be age-appropriate and contain no depictions of sex acts.

The law also prohibits any instruction related to gender identity and sexual orientation through sixth grade.

The law is incredibly vague, leaves too much room for interpretation, and has led to over 500 books being pulled off of library shelves statewide, including award-winning classics such as *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley and *I Know Why the Caged Birds Sings* by Maya Angelou.

Before Swift and Kelce, there was Monroe and DiMaggio

By Garrett Pearlman

Every generation has a celebrity relationship, and for teenagers today, nothing will match Travis Kelce and Taylor Swift.

Kelce, the all-pro tight end for the Kansas City Chiefs, and mega pop star Swift have been making headlines together for a while now.

Kelce, who started his NFL career with the Chiefs in 2013, has two Super Bowl rings and quite an impressive stat line.

Swift, *Time* magazine’s person of the year for 2023, has been making hits and wowing crowds for almost two decades. Swift has won album of the year three times, and her recent Eras Tour was easily the top grossing concert tour of all time.

This duo makes quite an impact together, and Swift is regularly seen cheering on Kelce at his Chiefs’ games.

But looking into the past, there have been others in their shoes, and Durant students may not realize that one 1950s relationship surpasses all others in newsworthiness, actress Marilyn Monroe and New York Yankees baseball player Joe DiMaggio.

The grandmother of Durant junior Gus Thoma, Ms. Carol Candler, remembers their groundbreaking relationship vividly 70 years later and hopes for a brighter future for Kelce and Swift.

Monroe and DiMaggio married in

Judge Locher determined that portions of the law cannot be enforced while two separate lawsuits filed by the American Civil Liberties Union of Iowa (ACLU) and Penguin Random House are pending.

The lawsuits went to a hearing just before the new year, and the timing of the ruling was crucial due to the fact that it came just three days before punishments for school staff, including administrators, teachers and librarians who violate the law, were set to go into effect January 1.

In a previous column, I criticized the Iowa Legislature’s failure to clarify such a broad and controversial law, and Mr. Locher agrees.

“The law is incredibly broad and has resulted in the removal of hundreds of books from school libraries, including, among others, nonfiction history books, classic works of fiction, Pulitzer Prize winning contemporary novels, books that regularly appear on Advanced Placement exams, and

even books designed to help students avoid being victimized by sexual assault,” the judge stated in his ruling.

In a section of SF 496, talk of “gender identity” and “sexual orientation” was prohibited through the sixth grade, but the law’s language was way too vague. In fact, if teachers refer to any relationship in a classroom, straight or LGBTQ+, they would be violating the law, the judge found.

“The statute is therefore content-neutral but so wildly overbroad that every school district and elementary school teacher in the State has likely been violating it since the day the school year started,” the judge ruled.

A big selling point made by Iowa Republicans this past year was that this law would be removing pornography from schools.

However, the lawsuit filed by Penguin Random House and its authors said that the books being classified under this category

are not considered pornography.

are not considered pornography. If sex acts are referred to in a book, they serve an important literary purpose, “like helping explain a character’s social or emotional development or sending a message about sexual assault, bullying, or others topics of pedagogical importance to students,” the ruling states.

The judge stated that the plaintiffs have standing because they are being “stigmatized” by the removal of their books from Iowa schools.

Some of the legislators who pushed for SF 496 are old enough to remember the 1982 Pink Floyd movie *The Wall* and the hit song from that movie, “Another Brick in the Wall.” In the song, Pink Floyd exclaims that in the classroom, “We don’t need no thought control” and tells teachers to “leave them kids alone.”

But is it the teachers who are to blame anymore, or is it the legislators? How the tables have turned.

1954, but she filed for divorce nine months later, according to an article on the website Biography. The two later reconciled as good friends, but Monroe died of a drug overdose in 1962.

“A still devoted DiMaggio never remarried and rarely spoke about Monroe during his life,” the article said. “He organized to have roses delivered three times a week to her crypt for 20 years.

Marilyn Monroe and Joe DiMaggio both broke headlines, alone and together, Ms. Candler recalled.

“He was very handsome, and she was very pretty and provocative, quite the noticeable sex symbol for that era,” she said.

“She’s a very sexual actress, and back then it was just not really popular. I think a lot of the older generation kind of shunned that because they weren’t used to it.” Ms. Candler said it didn’t appear that it bothered Monroe that she was breaking down a lot of barriers at that time.

DiMaggio was a sensational baseball player, winning nine World Series titles with the Yankees. His 56-game hitting streak in 1941 remains unbroken.

“Joe DiMaggio was a big baseball player and very well known for his home runs and his success in the baseball world and then to marry a movie star, you know, mixing the sports with the Hollywood scene

was just something that didn’t happen very often,” said Ms. Candler.

Ms. Candler sees the resemblance between the two celebrity couples.

“At the time, I don’t know if it was bigger, but I would definitely compare them,” said Ms. Candler

Ms. Candler was eight years old when Monroe and DiMaggio got married but read magazine articles about them as she got older. She said the nation was “very saddened” by the news of Monroe’s death.

“I think they realized how hard they had been on her,” Ms. Candler said, adding Monroe struggled with her popularity.

“People were not nice to her at all,” Ms. Candler said.

Candler also worries about a similar fate for Kelce and Swift’s relationship if something doesn’t change.

“Unless they keep their careers separate and make time for themselves, the me-

Environment

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very influential for me.”

Abels didn’t always plan to double major though.

Abels only planned to minor in environmental science but last spring that changed due to his newfound passion for it.

“I quickly realized that I was just as passionate about environmental science

dia can destroy a relationship as we’ve seen it happen to countless people that were in the spotlight,” said Ms. Candler.



Photo contributed by Brooke Thoma
Ms. Carol Candler is pictured with her grandson, Durant junior Gus Thoma.




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Today’s Dentistry coach of the month

Coach Mary Huesmann is coaching the Durant Wildcats junior varsity girls’ basketball team for her sixth year. She started coaching because she enjoyed playing sports many years before. What she enjoys about coaching is her interaction with her players and seeing their faces light up when they have success. Coach Huesmann’s goal this season for her team is to advance the skills of each of her players.




Huesmann



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Liberty Trust & Savings Bank’s club member of the month



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Senior Ryan Brown, the editor of *The Wildcat Chronicles*, has been part of the student newspaper since his junior year. Brown writes opinion pieces in his role as editor and enjoys being able to inform the community about what happens in the school.



Brown