

Film requests few in circuit courtrooms

By Tim Richard
staff writer

There is no big rush from news media to bring cameras and tape recorders into the courtrooms of five Michigan counties.

"Ingham County has had one request. Three other counties have had none. We've had all the rest," said Joan Young, Oakland Circuit Court administrator.

"We've had 12 or 14 requests. They're not case specific," she said. Rather than covering specific cases, the media were doing feature stories on cameras in courts.

Of Oakland's requests, half have been from television stations and half from newspapers, Young said. No requests have come from radio or press reporters to use tape recorders.

THE MICHIGAN Supreme Court next Feb. 1 will allow limited use of film and electronic devices in all courts except the juvenile division of probate courts.

As an experiment, the high court picked five counties where experimental use of film and tape began Oct. 15. The three where no requests have been made are Grand Traverse, Marquette and Wexford.

Photographers in many local district courts have been able to take pictures, but cameras have been virtually shut down in Oakland Circuit Court, where major criminal and civil cases are tried.

Reason: Supreme Court rules allow a defendant to object to any recorded coverage of his/her court proceedings.

"We've had a lot of objections," Young reported.

The rule allows the victim in a criminal case to object to any film-tape coverage. Individual witnesses also may object to film-tape coverage of themselves.

THERE HAVE BEEN two exceptions to the general tendency for defendants to object to coverage.

One is the murder case against Stacy Lee Barker, 21, accused of murdering a Southfield minister. Her defense is being handled by Charles Campbell, the colorful and attention-seeking attorney who handled the Inkster police killing case.

Barker's case is currently being tried before Circuit Judge Fred Mester.

The other came when the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. came to town to report on cameras in Michigan courtrooms.

CBC was able to film some attorney arguments in a civil case before Circuit Judge Norman Lippitt, Young said.

VIOLATIONS have been few. One violation has been TV filming of whispered huddles between attorneys and clients.

The rule prohibits broadcast or video closeups of conversations between co-counsel and so-called

"bench conferences" with the judge. The rule doesn't apply to "still" photography.

Jury selection and jurors may never be filmed or taped.

There are no restrictions on note taking by reporters or drawing by artists.

SOME AREA broadcasters have tentatively concluded that, although the rule allows two TV cameras in a courtroom, there actually is room for only one.

They are working on "pooling" arrangements, under which one company would share copies of its film.

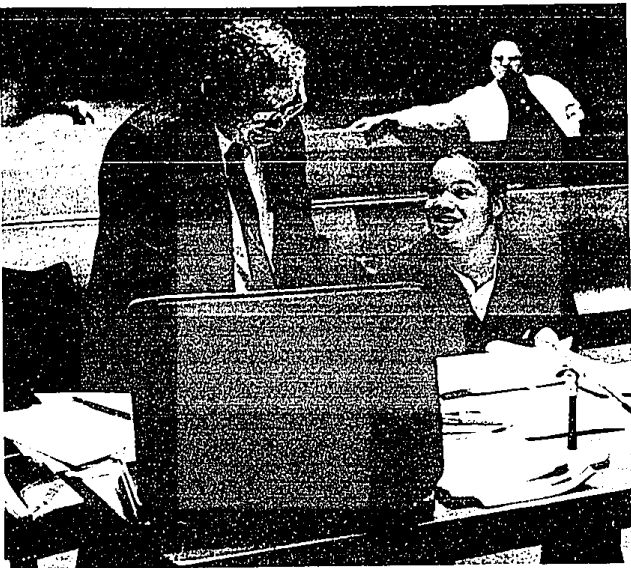
Chief Circuit Judge Richard Kuhn said that although some judges had reservations about the Supreme Court rule, all are working to cooperate.

The rule requires a judge to grant written permission to use film or tape in the courtroom, and to "discontinue, limit or temporarily suspend" such coverage.

THE SUPREME Court changed its rule against cameras in court this year on a 7-0 vote.

A year earlier, the high court voted 4-3 against lifting the ban, the opposition being led by then-Justice James Ryan. Since then, Ryan has been elevated to the U.S. Court of Appeals.

The U.S. Supreme Court in 1981 held that individual states could allow film-tape coverage of criminal trials.



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer

Attorney Charles Campbell is an exception to the general rule. Defense lawyers usually want cameras and tapes shut down in major criminal cases. Campbell is defending Stacy Lee Barker, 21, against charges she murdered a Southfield clergyman. The scene is Judge Fred Mester's Oakland Circuit courtroom.

Bands compete in Silverdome

The country's finest high school marching bands will gather at the Pontiac Silverdome this Friday and Saturday for the Bands of America grand national championship.

The 51 bands, including 14 from Michigan, are expected to attract more than 35,000 people. Ticket prices are \$5-\$9.

Band shows are choreographed to jazz, pop, stage and classical music. Colorful auxiliary units incorporate elaborate flags, innovative props and ballet, jazz and modern dance movements to create visual impact.

AREA BANDS include: Athens High of Troy, John Glenn of Westland and Plymouth.

During two days of preliminary competition, bands will be adjudicated by a panel of leading music and marching educators.

Twelve bands will perform Saturday evening in finals competition which will feature the "Commandant's Own" U.S. Marine Drum and Bugle Corps from Washington, D.C.,

in exhibition and conclude with a spectacular Gymnastyle finale.

This "Olympics of Marching Bands" has been held throughout the United States in its 12 years, and in the Indianapolis Hoosier Dome the past three years. This marks the first year this national championship has been held in the Silverdome.

DEBBIE LAFERTY, spokesman, said Bands of America Inc. is a non-profit educational organization based outside Chicago that promotes the band experience in high schools.

Commercial sponsors are Elias Brothers Restaurants, Pontiac-area Hilton Inns, and Northwest Airlines.

Preliminary competition will begin at 1 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 13, and run until 8:15 p.m. Preliminaries will resume at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday and finals will begin at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 14.

Tickets are \$1 for adults and \$5 for students and senior citizens each day of preliminary competition. All reserved finals seats are \$9.

Math, science teachers convene

The 47th annual Mathematics and Science Fall Conference runs from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 14, in Athens High School, 4333 John R., Troy.

Sponsors are the Metropolitan Detroit Science Teachers Association and the Detroit Area Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

The purpose is to give area mathematics and science teachers an opportunity to meet colleagues and observe innovative ideas, approaches and materials in their respective fields.

The program will include more than 100 sessions giving both information and hands-on experience

through commercial booths and exhibits.

There will be a special keynote presentation by Dr. Harry K. Wong entitled "Motivating the Math-and-Science-Shy Student." Wong is nationally known as a science educator and author of textbooks, films, tapes and articles. A practicing classroom teacher, he will share his successful methods for reducing discipline problems and drop-out rates to zero.

The conference is open to anyone interested in education from kindergarten through grade 12. On-site registration and lunch will be available. For advance information, call Janet Zidasek at 661-8163.

Gas bond case in Supreme Court

AP — The U.S. Supreme Court is considering a challenge to a Michigan law that requires utilities to obtain approval from the Public Service Commission before issuing long-term securities.

Attorney General Frank Kelley said the case involves his appeal of a 1986 decision by the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which struck down the Michigan law as unconstitutional.

The law is being challenged by two subsidiaries of the Detroit-based American Natural Resources Inc., ANR Pipeline Co. and ANR Storage Co.

THE ANR subsidiaries maintain extensive pipeline and gas storage

facilities in Michigan and supply about 40 percent of the state's natural gas through connections with Michigan Consolidated Gas Co., Michigan Gas Utilities Co. and other Michigan utilities.

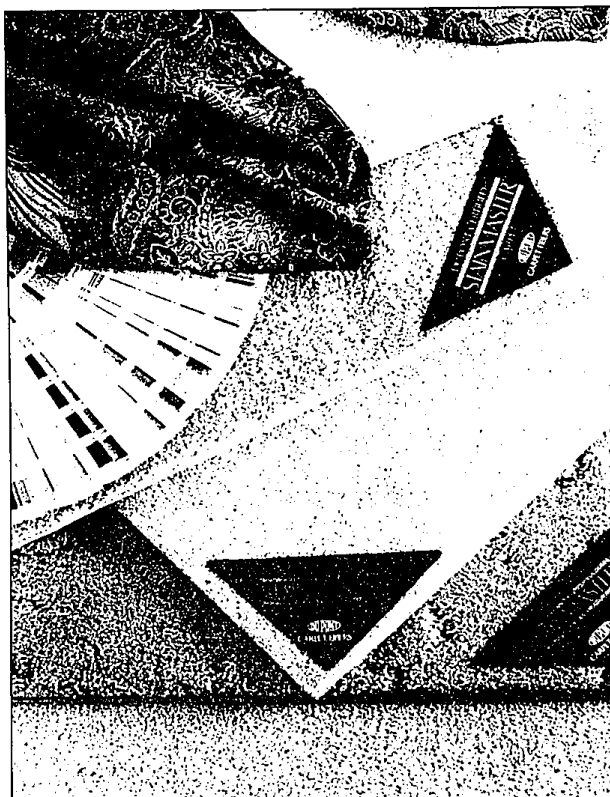
In briefs to the Supreme Court, Kelley argued that the law protects the public against potential abuses involving financings undertaken by utilities and natural gas companies.

"The law is necessary. Proper securities regulation serves the overall public interest, and that of ratepayers. In assuring continued natural gas service," Kelley said Friday.

He said 41 other states have similar laws, and the state's position has been supported by a wide variety of governmental associations.

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