

Shakespeare on trial again

OCC hosts 'appeal' of Supreme Court ruling

By Tim Richard
staff writer

MARK McPherson is putting William Shakespeare on trial again.

Actually, southeastern Michigan's flamboyant investigator of mysteries is challenging the findings of three U.S. Supreme Court justices that 36 English dramas were correctly attributed to Shakespeare. "Will Shakespeare can't be proven to have written anything," said McPherson, 40, who will act as prosecutor in the mock trial.

It starts at 7 p.m. Sunday, April 24, in the auditorium of Oakland Community College's Royal Oak Campus, 739 S. Washington. Tickets are \$10. Call McPherson at 875-8692 for ordering information.

The date is one day after the 424th anniversary of the defendant's birth.

WITH STATE Appeals Judge Myron Wahls presiding and attorney Judge Peter Spivak defending, McPherson will be joined by Oakland Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson

in outlining the sketchy knowledge of the Bard.

"I got the idea of appealing this in mock forum," said McPherson, referring to the case heard at American University in Washington, D.C., last September by Justices William J. Brennan Jr., Harry A. Blackmun and John Paul Stevens.

He wrote to the Folger Library, the United States' greatest storehouse of Shakespeare knowledge, asking for a forum to appeal. The reply said in effect: "It would be better if you didn't."

THAT GOADED McPherson, who acquired the habit of investigating sacred cows as a youth. In junior high school, he turned in a book report on the then-current notion that Shakespeare's ghost writer was Christopher Marlowe and had it rejected. Not flunked. Rejected.

Until two years ago, McPherson was on the staff of Wayne County Community College, gaining notoriety for a room in his home decorated like Sherlock Holmes' apartment at 221-B Baker Street.

He regaled night classes in his Holmes course by telling of his youthful intrusion into the west country estate where "Hound of the Baskervilles" took place. He launched a probe for Scotland's Loch Ness monster.

Today he is the principal of Daedalus (named for the Greek builder of the labyrinth), headquartered in his Grosse Ile home, lecturing, writing, investigating.

THE CASE against "Shakespeare" as McPherson calls him, boils down to "a bare minimum of contemporary observation" of the prosperous man from Stratford-on-Avon. Items:

- The first biography doesn't appear until a century after his death.
- His will makes no mention of literary properties, although 20 plays attributed to him were still unpublished when he died in 1623. There are no records of payments to him for plays.
- There were no eulogies in London at the time of his death.
- The first monument described him as "Will Shakspeare, gent." and the first bust showed him with a sack of grain rather than a pen.
- His portrait becomes altered with time. A drooping mustache is tilted upward, among other changes.

- In a wavering hand, he penned his surname with many different spellings. Indeed, there were many men with similar names in Warwickshire County.
- The first folio of plays attributed to him wasn't published until

seven years after his death. "We know about Christopher Marlowe's life, education, spying and political assassination," McPherson argues. "But we have bare bones facts on Shakspeare (from legal records). All the rest is conjecture."

WHAT MOTIVE could anyone have for attributing the plays, sonnets and long poems to an obscure son of a glove?

McPherson said England needed a laureate, a literary hero. Years after he lived, Shakespeare was ballooned into a myth, he believes.

G.B. Harrison, who edited Shakespeare's complete works for a standard college text, scoffed at the attacks.

"Literary persons, even the greatest, are seldom spectacular," Harrison wrote, explaining the shortage of biographical material. "Few writers attract a Boswell."

"What difference does it make who wrote the plays?" McPherson asks rhetorically, answering his own question with counter-questions:

"What difference does it make who wrote 'The Grapes of Wrath'?"

"What difference does it make who gave the Sermon on the Mount?"

"What difference does it make whose name is on your column?"

The April 24 event will be a trial in the format of a two-act play. A jury of 14, mostly media people, will decide it.

"This is a play," he said, "and I hope to catch the conscience of the public."



DAN DEAN/staff photographer

Mark McPherson says this famous but idealized bust of Shakespeare doesn't match the first portrait created after the bard's death.

Libertarians set income tax protest

Friday — deadline for filing state and federal income tax returns — will be demonstration night for the Libertarian Party of Michigan.

"This marks the 15th year that Libertarians have held formal demonstrations against taxation," said Emily Salvette of Bloomfield Hills, state party secretary.

Area demonstrations will run from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Friday in front of the U.S. post offices in Royal Oak, at 200 W. Second, and in Dearborn, Greenfield south of Michigan Ave.

"Then we converge on the main post office on Fort Street in downtown Detroit for a protest from 10 to 11:30 p.m.," she said.

THE LIBERTARIAN platform calls for repeal of personal and corporate income taxes and unconditional amnesty for all persons accused or convicted of tax resistance.

Other Michigan rallies will be in Lansing and Mount Clemens.

Information on the party and demonstration is available from Emily

Salvette at 334-4449.

Demonstrations will be "peaceful but probably boisterous," predicted Brian Wright, former party chairman.

Libertarian presidential nominee is Ron Paul, former four-term Republican congressman from Houston, Texas. Libertarians say he consistently voted for lower taxes and supports repeal of the federal income tax.

MICHIGAN OFFICIALS say state income tax returns are coming in slowly, apparently because of complexities in the new federal law.

Tax returns are running 10 percent behind the same time last year, said state treasury spokesman Robert Kolt. Altogether, 4.2 million state returns are expected.

Kolt said 90 percent of state taxpayers generally qualify for refunds. They will average \$301, up from last year's \$284. Refund checks are mailed out about three weeks after returns come in, he said.

Volunteers sought for latchkey kids

Each day between the hours of 3 and 5 p.m., millions of children spend time alone after school, taking care of themselves until their working parents come home. These "latchkey kids" face a variety of problems, both physical and emotional.

The Whirlpool Foundation and the American Home Economic Association have funded a \$5-million program called Project Home Safe to train home-economist volunteers. The volunteers will develop after-school programs for children.

Oakland County will be one of the test areas in the nation for Project Home Safe.

"**RIGHT NOW** we have 30 openings in the program. It's a great way to help your community develop and teach self-care skills for children between the ages of 5 and 13," said

Elaine Glasser, instructor and home economist with the Oakland County Cooperative Extension Service.

Classes will run four consecutive Saturdays beginning April 23. Hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Marygrove College, 4225 W. McNichols (Six Mile), in northwest Detroit.

To apply for training in Project Home Safe, call 1-800-424-8080.

THOSE ATTENDING the course will receive up-to-date training in latchkey and school-age child care issues.

They can earn a maximum of 37 professional development units from AHEA's Certificate Program.

After completing the course, participants are required to do 40 hours of community service work during the next year in self-care programs pertaining to their area's needs.

Advisory panel sought for CVC

The state Mental Health Department needs volunteers to serve on the Citizens Advisory Council of Clinton Valley Center in Pontiac.

Thomas D. Watkins Jr., director of the department (DMH), said the council meets at least quarterly to advise CVC director Anthony Drabik.

It discusses administrative policy and programs. It monitors programs, recipient rights issues and the hospital's operating budget.

The DMH encourages a broad range of people, including current and former consumers of mental health services, advocates, parents and guardians of consumers, govern-

ment officials, community mental health representatives and other interested persons.

Members are appointed by the DMH director for one or two years. DMH employees are not eligible to serve on CACs.

To be considered, interested persons should forward a letter of interest and biographical information by April 20 to: Lois Brennan, staff liaison, Mental Health Advisory Council, Michigan Department of Mental Health, Lewis Cass Building, Lansing, MI 48913.

For other information, contact Lois Brennan at (517) 373-6500.

Open house set on MBA

Non-business and business majors are being invited to learn more about the master of business administration degree at an Oakland University open house April 27.

The free program will be held

from 4 to 8 p.m. in the Crockerby of the Oakland Center. Continuous sessions will be held on admissions requirements, GMAT testing and program requirements.

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