

The Sun

LETTERS

November 14, 1999 Page(s): 6B
Edition: HOWARD
Section: LOCAL
Length: 1685 words
Index Terms:
COLUMN LETTER READING BY 9

Record Number: 9911130262

Leasure shouldn't hear Tripp case

I was shocked when I learned recently that Diane O. Leasure is the judge assigned to preside at the Linda Tripp wire-tapping trial in the Howard County Circuit Court. She is the only judge serving in Howard County who was not nominated by the Republican Party as its nominee for judge in the general elections.

Judge Leasure had to run for the office against other nominees nominated by the Republican party in the Republican election. Judge Leasure was appointed by Gov. Parris N. Glendening eight days after she had helped organize a \$350 per person fund-raiser for the governor.

It has already been perceived by many Maryland voters that Linda Tripp's prosecution is a retaliation by the Maryland Democratic Party for her role in exposing President Clinton's outrageous sexual conduct with Monica Lewinsky.

If Judge Leasure presides at the Linda Tripp wire-tapping trial, it may appear to many that this is a Democratic prosecution to get revenge against Ms. Tripp.

Maryland State Prosecutor Steven Monterelli, who will prosecute the case for the state, says he has no objection to the assignment of Judge Leasure to the case. Mr. Monterelli, the Democratic-appointed special prosecutor, as any casual observer of Maryland politics knows, recently lost a case prosecuting a Democratic offender.

Mr. Monterelli probably hopes he will have better luck in prosecuting a Republican. If Ms. Tripp is convicted in a court trial in which Judge Leasure presides, it will probably appear to many citizens in Maryland that this is Democratic politics as usual.

Donald B. W. Messenger, Laurel

Adults shouldn't avoid books that challenge kids

The Oct. 31 column, "Shunning the formula for good children's books" amazed me. Are there are still parents in this country, and here in Baltimore, "the city that reads," who would prefer that their children be comfortably under-stimulated than push them to learn new words

Children, as well as adults, learn new words by hearing them in context. For children, hearing new words like "inevitably" or "vending machine" in a book when they are listening intently is the best way to provide a head start on their vocabulary skills.

Diction, apparently, is not the only concern among these objecting parents. Content, which can often be dark and obscure in newer titles, worries parents who feel their children wouldn't understand unconventional topics usually reserved for adults. To remove such books that introduce new ideas would be to eliminate valuable messages contained in the pages of works such as Dr. Seuss' "The Sneeches and Other Stories," which conveys the powerful message of anti-discrimination.

To make the assumption that children don't understand the drier humor in such books as Jon Scieszka's "The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs," which appeals to both children and adults with its tongue-in-cheek interpretation of "The Three Little Pigs," would be to deny them a chance to be exposed to a broader range of age-appropriate literature. In a world where books are now competing with MTV, Nintendo and Pokemon cards, parents should be thankful that their children are even interested in reading, "big words" or not.

Laurel Bernstein, Clarksville

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