

CHIMPS HAVE A RIGHT TO “BODILY LIBERTY”

Recently, a court hearing was heard before a New York State judge that considered the rights of chimpanzees.

Steven M. Wise is the president of the Nonhuman Rights Project and he believes that apes should be granted identical rights to most humans. Bill Donohue said most humans because his expansive idea of rights does not extend to unborn children. Whether it extends to unborn apes is not known. He is, of course, a professor.

Wise was taken seriously by State Supreme Court Justice Barbara Jaffe. Too bad she didn't question him about a comment he once made comparing his son to an ape: "I don't see a difference between a chimpanzee and my 4 1/2 year-old son." Having not met his son, Donohue will just have to take his word for it.

Wise wants to liberate Hercules and Leo, two chimps, from Stony Brook University; they are being studied there by a researcher. He did not say whether they should be able to matriculate at Stony Brook, or whether they should be allowed to pay in-state tuition. More important, he says the chimps possess "bodily liberty." Which begs the question: Why doesn't a child who is living in his mother's womb possess this right?

Curiously, the rights of the unborn are not mentioned on Wise's website. But he has been quoted elsewhere saying, "There are many reasons to support the argument that a woman should have the legal right to an abortion."

In Wise's mind, the Catholic Church is the enemy of human rights. He teaches, by the way, at St. Thomas Law School, a Catholic institution. So who is his champion of human rights? Peter Singer. Singer believes that it should be legal for

parents to kill their disabled newborn children. He also believes that bestiality should be legal because "sex with animals does not always involve cruelty." He is, of course, a professor (at Princeton).

Donohue had some advice for Wise: He should keep Singer away from Hercules and Leo.