

CHRISTMAS CONTINUE

CONTROVERSIES

The old battle between those who want crèches and menorahs on public property and those who don't was fought again in December 1999. In Somerset, Massachusetts a coalition of residents got together to remove a nativity scene and a menorah from the grounds of the Town Office Building. The group was an assembly of Catholic, Protestant and Jewish clergymen opposed to mixing secular symbols with religious ones so as to pass constitutional muster.

In Jersey City, New Jersey, Mayor Bret Schundler lighted a menorah in front of City Hall and later erected a crèche; earlier in the year, a federal appeals court took his side in a dispute with the ACLU that has been going on for five years.

In Wall, New Jersey, the ACLU lost again in its bid to stop a Christmas/Hanukkah display in front of the municipal building.

In Fairfax County, Virginia a federal appeals overturned a local law that prevented a woman from erecting a manger scene outside a Fairfax County government center. "The victory is mine," said a triumphant Rita Warren, "it's for God and the people who can go to the government center and see the First Amendment work."