

CMU GUILTY OF ANTI-CATHOLICISM

Carnegie-Mellon University has placed a student, Patrick Mooney, on probation for removing an anti-Catholic poster from the school. The poster, which featured a picture of John Cardinal O'Connor with the inscription "Know Your Scumbags" alongside it, was posted by the gay campus organization, cmuOUT. On a related matter, harassment charges were levied against Mooney for simply conveying his criticisms of the poster to a visiting professor; he was found not guilty of that charge. Now, however, Mooney has been warned by school officials not to talk to anyone about this matter and no one, including Mooney's lawyer, is allowed to obtain a tape of the hearings, thus blunting the prospects for a successful appeal. Everything has now been declared "confidential." The Catholic League has conveyed its position, which is critical of CMU, to Dean Michael Murphy. And as the League informed Dean Murphy, this is not the first time that CMU has punished Mooney for his Catholicism. The League is now considering a suit against the university.

Dr. William A. Donohue, president of the Catholic League, made the following statement on the Mooney affair.

"Over the past few years, Patrick Mooney has endured repeated assaults on his religion by CMU administrators. In 1991, Mooney was victimized for his refusal to wear a pro-lesbian button during the in-service training period for RAs (resident assistants). Mooney, a Roman Catholic, cited religious convictions for refusing to wear the button; he was stripped of his RA status for doing so, causing a considerable loss of financial assistance.

"More recently, Mooney has been charged with harassment for disagreeing with a visiting professor over the propriety of

anti-Catholic posters. Had the inscription 'Know Your Scum bags' been written alongside pictures of Rev. Martin Luther King, students who removed such posters would no doubt have been congratulated by CMU administrators and the offending parties who posted them would be attending sensitivity training workshops on the heritage of African-Americans. But because the posters (all of which violated school policy by not listing the sponsors) targeted Cardinal O'Connor, the student who merely removed one of them (for the purpose of showing it to the administrators) has been placed on 'disciplinary probation' and the offending party, namely cmuOUT, has escaped with impunity.

"The fact that Mooney was found not guilty of harassment for simply conveying his convictions to a visiting professor does little to change matters. Mooney has been ordered by CMU officials not to discuss this affair with anyone. His lawyer has been denied a tape of the hearing, thus impairing the chances of a successful appeal. The word 'Confidential' appears all over the letter sent to Mooney by school officials and every attempt is being made to muzzle coverage of this incident. In short, not only is anti-Catholicism alive and well. at CMU, so too is fascism.

"The Catholic League is presently considering court action against CMU. At a minimum, the League will broadcast this matter all over the country, via newspapers, radio, television and in its own journal, Catalyst."

The Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights is the nation's largest Catholic civil rights organization. It defends the right of Catholics—lay and clergy alike—to participate in American life without defamation or discrimination.