

Professor testifies in arson, beating trial

By Jolayne Houtz
Of the Emerald

A University professor, the victim of a Nov. 8 arson and alleged beating, testified Friday about the mental problems and "delusions" of the case's defendant.

Harry Wolcott, 55, an education and anthropology professor, said that Douglas Andrew Briles' mental problems appeared to begin in January 1982 when Briles believed he had murdered his father.

Briles, 24, of Escondido, Calif., is accused of beating Wolcott with a wooden dowel and burning down Wolcott's Eugene house at 85711 S. Willamette St. Briles is charged with first-degree arson, first-degree burglary and second-degree assault.

Defense attorney Ted Carp contends that Briles, a diagnosed paranoid schizophrenic, was suffering from a mental disease or defect when he committed the crime and cannot be held responsible for his actions.

Wolcott said Briles, who lived in a lean-to shack he had built on Wolcott's property from May 1980 to April 1982, continued to believe he had killed his father, Ted Briles of Eugene, during an argument over his father's refusal to buy his son a motorcycle.

Wolcott said Briles mentioned feeling what he called "a sledgehammer to the brain" during this time, and Wolcott believed he was experiencing deep mental anguish.

Wolcott said he finally succeeded in getting Briles to visit a local mental health counselor, but it did not appear to help what Wolcott saw as Briles' worsening mental condition.

Briles decided to leave Eugene soon after this visit, Wolcott said.

Wolcott said Briles lived on his property, although without Wolcott's express or written consent, for almost a year before the two entered a homosexual relationship.

Briles eventually returned to Escondido, where his mother lives, and Wolcott began writing him there in July of 1982.

Wolcott said he decided to use Briles' life history for an article in the fall of 1981 and paid Briles approximately \$100 out of the grant money for his time and some editing Briles did on the article.

The article, published in spring 1983, is entitled, "Adequate Schools and Inadequate Education: The Life History of a Sneaky Kid." The article examines "Brad," a young man

with a history of juvenile problems and petty thefts, who unsuccessfully attempts to rob a convenience store.

Defense attorney Carp and Wolcott debated over whether Wolcott would have used Briles as the subject of the article if he had believed Briles had brain damage.

"Does Mr. Briles have brain damage?" Wolcott asked Carp. "I damn well do!" Briles shot out angrily from the counsel table.

Both the defense and Deputy District Attorney Frank Papagni agree that Briles has been diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic, but Papagni said a psychiatrist has diagnosed Briles as also suffering from an antisocial personality disorder.

Papagni said he will try to prove that Briles was under the influence of this disorder when he acted last November.

In Oregon, a person who lacks the ability to understand that he or she is committing a crime can be determined "guilty except for insanity." Personality disorders or antisocial tendencies do not qualify as a "mental disease or defect" under this law.

Wolcott said he returned to his house Nov. 8, unaware that Briles was in Eugene and that he was in fact hiding in his

house. Briles allegedly knocked Wolcott to the floor and began beating him with a wooden dowel he brought with him from California, where he had lived until two days before arriving in Eugene by bus.

When Wolcott grabbed the dowel, he said Briles picked up a two-by-four and continued beating Wolcott, repeating, "I'm going to kill you."

Wolcott said he escaped from the house and Briles apparently fled after setting fire to the house, which he had soaked with 500 gallons of stove oil from a nearby storage tank before Wolcott came home.

The Lane County Circuit Court trial will resume today at 1:30 p.m. and is expected to continue at least through the end of the week.



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Measure 9 to increase student involvement in health insurance

Increased student participation in the health insurance process is the goal of Ballot Measure 9, one of nine measures students will vote on in the general elections Wednesday and Thursday, says Mike Grossmann, chair of the ASUO Student Insurance Committee.

The measure, a proposed amendment to the ASUO Constitution, would allow the

committee would oversee and set policies for the ASUO health insurance program, which provides coverage to University students and their dependents.

There has been an acting insurance committee for some time, Grossmann said, but this group has met on an irregular basis, primarily when an important issue arose.

Grossmann said the establishment of a permanent committee would be more effective than maintaining the current system because it would provide the continuity and active student participation that has been lacking in the past.

The amendment proposes that the committee be composed of five students, to be appointed by the ASUO president and subject to confirmation by the Student University Affairs Board. Three of the five students will

serve one-year terms, and the other two will serve for staggered, two-year terms.

The responsibilities of the committee will include contract negotiation and renewal, evaluation of the agent of record, and review of the schedule of benefits offered.



ASUO president to appoint students to a permanent Health Insurance Committee. This

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