

Judge throws out Jones' lawsuit against Clinton

The judge ruled that Jones' evidence fell 'far short' of proving sexual harassment

By David A. Lieb
The Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — In a legal victory for President Clinton, a federal judge threw out Paula Jones' civil lawsuit Wednesday, saying her evidence fell "far short" of proving sexual harassment.

"While the court will certainly agree that the plaintiffs' allegations describe offensive conduct, the court ... has found that the governor's alleged conduct does not constitute sexual assault," U.S. District Judge Susan Webber Wright ruled.

"The plaintiffs' allegations fall far short of the rigorous standards for establishing a claim of outrage under Arkansas law," she said in a 39-page decision.

President Clinton is "pleased that he has received the vindication he has long awaited," said his

chief spokesman, Mike McCurry, who was traveling with Clinton in Africa.

The Rutherford Institute, which has been paying the legal costs of Jones' suit against Clinton, said, "We will appeal this decision to the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals immediately and confidently seek redress for Mrs. Jones' grievances for as long as is necessary, even to the Supreme Court of the United States."

An embattled White House immediately cheered the news, which comes more than three years after Jones first filed a lawsuit alleging Clinton made an unwanted sexual advance in a Little Rock, Ark., hotel room in 1991.

At the time, Clinton was Arkansas' governor and Jones was a state worker.

Clinton learned of the decision as he was winding up a 12-day trip.

He got a message to call his lawyer, Robert Bennett, and contacted him. When told the news, "He asked in fact if it was an April

Fool's joke," said spokesman Mike McCurry.

"Obviously, the president is pleased," McCurry said. He said Clinton shared the news with his wife, Hillary. "Both of them were pleased to get the news."

The Clintons' attorney, Robert Bennett, hailed Wright's ruling as a "very strong and very powerful opinion."

Bennett had argued that Jones' case was motivated by politics and had failed to show she was harmed. "I think we were very strong on the facts and on the law," Bennett said outside his law offices.

While it seems to be a major victory, the White House was quick to note that Clinton still faces major hurdles, most notably the Whitewater prosecutors' criminal investigation into the Monica Lewinsky matter.

"This has been a fact of life and no doubt other things will remain a fact of life for him," McCurry said. He said Clinton had shown "extraordinary discipline" in not

being distracted by the case.

Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., said he was not "particularly surprised" by the judge's ruling but said he did not think it would have any impact on the continuing investigation by Whitewater prosecutor Kenneth Starr.

"I think there has been pressure on him to get to a conclusion," Lott said, "but it's pretty hard for him to get to a conclusion when the White House won't submit facts or tell the truth."

Wright's ruling comes more than three years after Jones first went to court alleging Clinton made an unwanted sexual advance.

Clinton's lawyers had said that even if he had asked Jones for sex on May 8, 1991, at a Little Rock hotel room, the case against him was "veneer-thin" because there was no proof that she suffered in her state job, as she alleged.

Her employment records showed that she received regular raises — and Clinton's lawyers

said one of her most serious allegations of ill treatment after the alleged incident was that she didn't receive flowers on Secretary's Day one year.

The judge took note that Jones continued to work at the Arkansas Industrial Development Commission for another 19 months and never filed a formal complaint or told her supervisors of the incident.

"The court has determined that her quid pro quo and hostile work environment sexual harassment claim are without merit and warrant a grant of summary judgment," Wright said.

The judge wrote that whatever went on in the hotel room, it "was brief and isolated, did not result in any physical harm ... did not result in distress so severe that no reasonable person could be expected to endure it."

She also dismissed the portion of the lawsuit against state trooper Danny Ferguson, who allegedly set up the meeting during a state conference Clinton attended.

Ski and Snowboard Rentals

Downhill\$10 per day
Cross Country.....\$7.50 per day
Snowboard\$20 per day

ANDERSON'S
SPORTING GOODS
SALMON · ALBANY · CORVALLIS · EUGENE
199 W. 8th Eugene • 484-7344

university of california, santa cruz

1998 Summer Session

Two intensive five-week sessions:
Session I: 6/29 - 7/31
Session II: 8/3 - 8/24

Plus:
Summer Spanish Intensive Program (6/29 - 8/21)
Immersion Program in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgendered Studies (6-29 - 7-24)

Questions?
Call: (408) 459-2524
Fax: (408) 459-3070
e-mail: summers@cats.ucsc.edu
Visit our web site:
www.ucsc.edu/ucsc/summer

ODE WORLDWIDE
www.
uoregon.edu/~ode

Introducing the bigger can with the bigger taste.™



Bigger is always better!™

©Trademark of U.S. Tobacco Co. or its affiliates for its smokeless tobacco. ©1997 U.S. TOBACCO CO.