

Two members step down from Constitution Court

Stefan Myers and Courtney Warner both cited upcoming graduation behind their resignations

BY PARKER HOWELL
SENIOR NEWS REPORTER

Two members of the five-person ASUO Constitution Court slated to graduate this year resigned Monday, another change to the court's makeup after Chief Justice Randy Derrick stepped down as head of the court May 2.

Associate Justices Stefan Myers and Courtney Warner announced their resignations earlier this month, citing impending graduation from the University. Both justices urged ASUO President Adam Petkun to appoint a replacement to ease the transition for next year's court.

Petkun, who served on the court before being elected president, said he hopes the positions will be filled before the year ends. He added that President-elect Adam Walsh is being included in the hiring process.

Justices are appointed by the ASUO president and serve for the length of their education at the University. The court has the authority to rule "on any question arising under the ASUO Constitution" and can "impose broad

sanctions to compel compliance with its rulings," according to the Green Tape Notebook.

Petkun praised the court's work. "I think this was probably the most effective Constitution Court I've seen in my four years here," he said, adding that justices "didn't shy away from making tough choices that may have been unpopular."

Myers said in an April 29 e-mail resignation letter to Petkun that it has been "a true honor to dedicate my time to serve students and protect their rights and opportunities."

"The Court itself this year has done an amazing service to the student body through its careful consideration and fairness in all its dealings," he said.

In a similar e-mail sent May 2, Warner also said it has been a "privilege" to serve students.

"This was an important year for the Court in terms of the decisions that it made and precedents that were set," she said.

The court ruled on several major cases this year.

In February it denied sophomore Silas Snider's request to begin gathering signatures to initiate a recall of the executive and the ASUO Student Senate.

In March, the court removed Programs Finance Committee members Eden Cortez, Dan Kieffer and Mason Quiroz from the committee after it found they "acted in willful defiance of viewpoint neutrality" during a controversial Feb. 1 budget hearing for the Oregon Commentator.

When Cortez later appealed the decision, the court upheld its ruling that he defied viewpoint neutrality, ordering that he remain removed from the PFC and the Senate.

The court delayed the results of the ASUO's primary elections in April until it found that the ASUO Election Board didn't show favor to ASUO Executive candidates Ashley Rees and Jael Anker-Lagos.

But Derrick, who investigated the matter for the court, reprimanded the board for a "serious lapse of judgment" when it allowed a representative of the ticket to blow up balloons and complete financial paperwork for the board.

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Pulse

'Evidence of Love' author doesn't connect dots of plot development

Melissa McConnell's debut novel boasts strong description but lacks character explanation

BY AMY LIGHTY
SENIOR PULSE REPORTER

Romance, mystery, suspense and tragedy are all attempted components of Melissa McConnell's debut novel, "Evidence of Love." Set in the politically charged backdrop of Washington, D.C., this tragic love story sets out to conquer both government politics and the politics of emotions as relationships fizzle, secret affairs begin, tragedy strikes and love is found.

McConnell has an incredible knack for description, something that comes through on every page. McConnell makes it easy for the reader to see exactly what she wants you to see, from the emotion on someone's face to the backyard of the main character's mother's home, but there's still something lacking in character development. McConnell never made me truly care about any of the characters, although at times I laughed with and felt empathy for some of them. But in general, it was difficult to feel a true connection.

When the story begins, the protagonist, Catherine, has recently moved from lively and bustling Manhattan back to her hometown of Washington, D.C., where she quickly

loses her individuality, her spunk for life and her romance with fiancé Harry. Because this is the way the character is first introduced — she doesn't care much about herself, and subsequently neither do I — I found it difficult to ever really establish a relationship with Catherine. The same goes for the background characters, many of who feel as if they were just thrown in to give Catherine someone to play off of but don't ever develop into much of anything.

Catherine works as a speech writer for the vice president of the United States. Although she is talented and well-respected, she finds herself distracted and unmotivated, a situation that makes readers feel as "blah" as Catherine seems. In Harry, Catherine has found the man she thinks she wants to spend the rest of her life with. He has a top-secret job as "special adviser" to the president, a job which Catherine and the readers know little about. All Catherine knows is that Harry's hours are often late and that he has become more distant since their move. Then — pretty much out of the blue for readers, but especially for Catherine — Harry disappears, only leaving a note that he will be

gone on business for a few days and he won't be coming back to her when and if he returns.

McConnell then does something that threw me for a loop: She abruptly changes characters and point of view. With Catherine, the story is told in first person, but at the beginning of the second chapter and sporadically throughout the rest of the book, McConnell changes to third person as she describes what's happening to Harry. Because the point of view is shifted to an outsider's perspective, it's even harder to relate to him. Although readers know where he's at and what he's doing, Harry is never developed as a person, and by the end of the book readers still don't fully understand who he ever was.

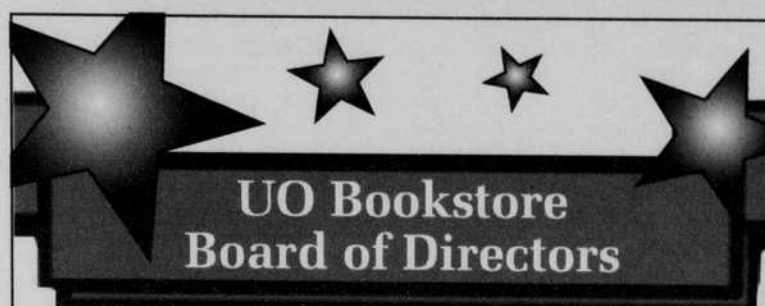
"Evidence of Love" has the potential to mirror the wonderfully written "The Pilot's Wife" by Anita Shreve: A love story with a mysterious twist that makes the readers and characters question if they ever really know the person they're sharing their bed with. But McConnell fails to build any of that intrigue or explanation of her characters' actions and motivations. Although "Evidence of Love" is considerably well-penned and full of fantastic descriptions, the plot and characters should have been better developed.

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