

# The Post and Courier

Charleston, SC

Monday, October 8, 2007

Letter to the Editor

## Serious questions

Frank Wooten's Sept. 30 column titled "Here comes the judge: Give Conrad a fair shot" extols his classmate Robert J. Conrad Jr.'s "admirable tolerance" toward his son's college basketball decision.

Mr. Wooten also addresses Conrad's nomination to a lifetime seat as a "federal appeals court judge — a judicial pinnacle surpassed only by becoming a U.S. Supreme Court justice."

Mr. Wooten belittles serious questions by writing that Conrad wrote a letter to the Catholic Dossier calling the book titled "Dead Man Walking," by Sister Helen Prejean, "liberal drivel" nearly a decade ago.

In this letter, which Conrad fired off in 1999 (not 1997), he identified himself as a "federal prosecutor" and denounced Sister Helen as a "church-hating nun." Conrad's contempt was far-reaching: "The ACLU, Amnesty International and other like-minded organizations are her guiding lights. For fellowship, well, there is the 'Sisterhood.' "

Conrad provided fresher ammo during his 2005 district court confirmation, when he raised credibility questions by testifying that "I respect and admire Sister Helen" and that he did not think any civil rights groups (including the ACLU and Amnesty International) were "radical" or "fringe."

Wooten insists Conrad does have "4th Circuit experience, occasionally sitting 'by designation.' " In the most prominent example, however, Conrad joined a notorious mountaintop removal decision that reversed a district judge. Three 4th Circuit judges (out of eight who voted) dissented from the denial of rehearing because the decision "eviscerated" key Clean Water Act language and undermined its protective purpose.

**Glenn Sugameli**

**Senior Legislative Counsel**

**Earthjustice**

1625 Massachusetts Ave., NW

No. 702

Washington, D.C.