

# Some educators convinced clothes make the student

By PAUL HARVEY

Are school-age girls inviting rape — by the way they act and the way they dress?

A Wisconsin judge said they are. And he, Judge Archie Simonson, refused to jail a 15-year-old boy for what the judge called "reacting normally" to the sex stimuli all around him.

Madison (Wis.) County Judge Simonson considered the case of the boy accused of raping a girl, 16, in a schoolhouse stairwell. Then he released the boy to go home — subject to one year of "court supervision" — but no confinement.

Some women, individually and organized, reacting with indignation, picketed the courthouse with signs reading "Rape is not normal!" and "Archie Must Go!"

But the position of the judge is supported by an increasing number of educators and sociologists — that our sex-oriented atmosphere inflames passions, encourages rape.

**THE JUDGE SAYS** the state university town of Madison, Wis., is particularly permissive. He mentioned revealing female clothing plus sex emphasis in movies and magazines, billboards and nude bars.

In person, Judge Simonson does not sound like a close-minded puritanical prude.

Simonson is married, father of four, including three daughters. He seems genuinely to be searching for an explanation and solution to an increasing problem which is glutting his court.

The noisy response to this court ruling is now causing some educators to say aloud what they have been thinking: that the deterioration of public education might be

traceable to a relaxation of the school dress code.

Academically, we are going backward. No need to recite the sad statistics relating to fundamental illiteracy; nobody is defending the public education record any longer.

Mrs. Trudy Clayton abandoned the teaching profession in Michigan because of the chronic problems of deportment, disinterest and surrender to slovenliness. She is convinced that much of the blame relates to the relaxed dress code.

Whether sloppy attire was more cause than effect is debatable, but it is her observation that the braless look and the shabby shoes and the unclean jeans begat undisciplined conduct and disdain for academic excellence.

**YOUNG PEOPLE TEND** to be imitators — of their peers and their idols. In apportioning the responsibility, one must acknowledge the bad examples of the play-actors who show up for TV talk show interviews looking like unmade beds.

Further, an economic factor must be recognized in this recent revolt against stockings and starch, creases and cleanliness. It's expensive to look neat. But somehow, even during the John Boy Walton depression days, we managed it.

Any excess ultimately is its own undoing.

Perhaps the situation in Madison will encourage that and other communities to look at themselves in the mirror and see if they really like what they see.