**SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES**

HAZELWOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT, EL AL. v. KUHLMEIER

No. 86-836 Argued October 13, 1987 – Decided January 13, 1988

During the 1982-1983 school year, students taking a Journalism II class at Hazelwood East High School ran a student newspaper called *Spectrum.* It gave the students a chance to practice what they learned in Journalism I. Like most student newspaper, *Spectrum* featured stories about student life in and out of school. Over 4,500 students, school personnel, and other people in St. Louis County, Missouri, read *Spectrum.*

The May 13, 1983, issue was supposed to contain two controversial articles. One article described the experiences of three pregnant students. *Spectrum* used different names for the three girls to protect their privacy. In the article, the pregnant girls commented on their sexual activity and use or non-use of birth control. The second article described the way divorce affected students at Hazelwood East High School. In the article, one student blamed his father for his parents’ divorce. He said his father did not spend enough time with the family, argued about everything, and always was out of town on business or out late playing cards with his friends.

Principal Robert E. Reynolds reviewed each issue of *Spectrum* before it was published. When he reviewed the May 13 issue three days before publication, he did not like the articles on pregnancy and divorce. Reynolds though it was too easy to identify the girls and their boyfriends in the article on pregnancy. Reynolds also though the article would give young students a bad message about casual sex. As for the article on divorce, Principal Reynolds though it was unfair, and failed to give the father a chance to tell his side of the story. Reynolds did not think there was enough time to rearrange *Spectrum* to delete the two articles. He decided to delete the entire two pages on which the articles appeared. Those pages contained four other articles that Reynolds would have allowed if there had been time to layout the paper again.

Many students did not learn about Reynolds’s decision until after *Spectrum* was published with two missing pages. Three students, including Kuhlmeier, were furious. They believed Principal Reynolds had violated their rights. Under the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, state and local governments, including public schools, must obey the freedom of the press. Kuhlmeier and two other journalism students sued Principal Reynolds and the Hazelwood School District in federal district court. The court ruled in favor of the school, saying Reynolds acted reasonably to protect privacy for the pregnant girls and the divorced father. The Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, however, reversed. It said public schools may not violate the freedom of press except to protect education.

Principal Reynolds and the Hazelwood School District took the case to the U.S. Supreme Court.