



Antigonish Women's Resource Centre



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June 16, 1989

Honourable Thomas J. McInnis, Attorney General
10th Floor, Bank of Montreal Bldg.
P.O. 7, Halifax
N.S. B3J 2L6

Dear Mr. McInnis,

The Antigonish Women's Association would like to voice our grave concern at this time over the charge of wife assault laid against Judge Ronald MacDonald and to which he has pleaded guilty. As a women's organization, we would like to make a statement on behalf of the women in this community who are shocked, angry and dismayed over this recent event.

It is with a sense of disillusionment and betrayal that women and indeed all citizens view such a figure of authority who has so abused his position of power in our community. Judge MacDonald could be and no doubt for some people has been perceived as a role model for just and fair behavior. Should Judge MacDonald be granted an absolute discharge and returned to the bench, what message would this give the women and men in Antigonish and the province about wife assault?

Wife battering, that is, using physical violence to control, reprimand and intimidate wives has been analyzed as a direct form of power control by men to keep women obedient and submissive. It is one of the many horrors of a male dominated culture where women and children have historically been seen as the property of men.

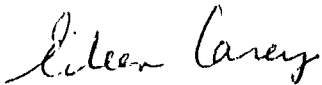
As a society, we have recognized in recent years the rights of women to seek justice for this criminal act. Women's organizations have been at the forefront of active lobbying to make changes in the laws that would seek justice for battered women and children. Now in our own community we are faced with the terrible incongruity of seeing our judge plead guilty to such a crime.

Women in Antigonish are angry and we demand that Judge MacDonald be permanently removed from his position on the bench. His behaviour is a disgrace to his profession. We know that wife battering cuts across class, race and religious lines and that it is found in all professions. However, it is still shrouded in silence in most communities. We are not

willing to collude with this silencing which contributes to the oppression of women and the perpetuation of the system of dominance and control so pervasive in our society.

Our organization is concerned with justice and equality. Indeed, these are our primary concerns. We see and recognize women's low status and lack of power and everyday talk to women who have been abused by their husbands and see their abuse condoned by an unsympathetic system. For these reasons we say NO to re-instating a judge that cannot because of his criminal conduct represent justice for us in the courts of Antigonish.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Eileen Carey".

Eileen Carey, Chair
Social Action Committee
Antigonish Women's Association