

VFW Outraged at Court Decision

VFW national commander calls upon members to assist fallen Marine's dad

Mar 31, 2010

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The national commander of the nation's largest organization of combat veterans is furious about the recent Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit Court decision ordering Albert Snyder, the father of a slain Marine to pay legal costs to the Westboro Baptist Church.

Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kan., led by Fred Phelps, has for years been taunting grieving mourners at military funerals nationwide. During the funeral of Marine Lance Corporal Matthew Snyder's funeral in 2006, the anti-gay group praised the loss of the young Marine as well as other of the nation's young servicemen and women, calling their deaths a by-product of a nation that tolerates homosexuality.

"This is a travesty at best and borders on the obscene, said VFW National Commander Thomas J. Tradewell Sr., of Sussex, Wis. "The irony in this whole situation is that the blood and sacrifice of our nation's heroes have enabled this group to spread their message of hate. Yet, they celebrate when one of America's best pays the ultimate sacrifice preserving that right of free speech," the Vietnam veteran said.

"Mr. Snyder has already confronted the difficulties of burying his Marine son and then bringing a lawsuit against this group of hate-mongers. It is absolutely wrong for the court to order him to shoulder a financial burden on top of everything else. That is why VFW national headquarters will be making a donation to the fund that has been established to assist in paying the legal costs. Additionally, I am asking that each of the more than 1.5 million members of the VFW do what they can to assist Mr. Snyder, even taking the time to offer him note of support and encouragement."

A fund has been set up to help Mr. Snyder pay the court costs. None of the money will be for attorneys, who are graciously representing him pro bono. To contribute, send a check payable to "Al Snyder Fund" to:

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