

# The Press & Dakotan

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**OPINION**

## A Kentucky Clerk And The Law

The case of Kim Davis, the Kentucky county clerk who is refusing to issue marriage licenses to anyone because of her religious objections to gay marriage, has become the kind of news story that attracts an inordinate amount of attention to a matter that is then crushed down to its most basic terms for easier digestion.

How truly big this news story is — or isn't — really doesn't matter at this point. Instead, it's turned into a handy flashpoint where our political and social differences can conveniently collide.

It may now have reached a conclusion, at least as far as the facts on the ground go. On Monday, Davis returned to work and announced she would let others in her office issue marriage certificates, just as long as her name wasn't attached to documents.

But the debate will surely go on, at least until the next issue of interest pops up.

Last month, Davis refused to issue licenses to a same-sex couple as well as three heterosexual couples because of her objection to the recent Supreme Court decision that opened the door to legalized gay marriage across the country. She was subsequently ordered by a judge to issue the licenses, but she refused, claiming she was acting "under God's authority." She was subsequently jailed for contempt and was then released to a crowd of supporters, protesters and media. Some Republican presidential candidates (but not all, for there was and is a sharp difference of opinion on this) rushed to her side to defend her, and she has become a hot conversation topic across many dinner tables across the country.

All that is fine, although the image of presidential hopefuls using this woman as a handy photo op — which is basically what these candidates are doing — is a little unsettling but totally unsurprising. (It's unfortunate this occurred during a presidential election cycle, although one may wonder sometimes when is it NOT a presidential cycle anymore?) However, the matter does have people talking, and it's probably a good discussion to have. This case is more about the freedom of religion and its limitations than it is about the issue of same-sex marriage.

The bottom line is this: While we are all constitutionally guaranteed the right to worship as we choose, we do not have the right to impose our religious views on others.

Davis may feel she was having her religious views and constitutional right suppressed, but that's not really true. She is tasked with carrying out the law of the land, which now (inconveniently for her, apparently) includes something with which she disagrees. She does have the right to exclude herself from this task and let others in her office perform it, which appears to be the road she has rightfully taken. She does NOT have the right to use her religious view as an excuse to ignore and reinterpret the law to fit her own feelings. There is a contradiction in her claiming to defend her constitutional right when she is actually violating what is now a constitutional right of others. That's why judges are arbiters, and that's why the law must prevail.

If she were not an elected official, she probably should have been fired — not because of her religious views but because she was not doing her job.

Since she is an elected official, it will be up to the voters of her county to determine whether she should remain on the job.

And if she had continued to defy the law and the orders of the court because of her religious views, she should have resigned because, clearly, her job and her religious views were not compatible.

Perhaps Davis's decision Monday will put that aspect of the matter to rest, but it does stir questions that people around the country, caught up in this episode, are working to answer. And that's one thing that has come from this, at least.

kmh

**ONLINE OPINION**

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the Press & Dakotan's Web site are as follows:

**LATEST RESULTS:**

Do you think the U.S. is safer now than it was on Sept. 11, 2001?  
No.....70%  
Yes.....30%

**TOTAL VOTES CAST**.....256  
The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.

**CURRENT QUESTION:**

Do you think the Minnesota Twins will make the playoffs?  
To cast your vote in the PRESS & DAKOTAN'S Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

**IN HISTORY**

**By The Associated Press**  
Today is Tuesday, September 15, the 258th day of 2015. There are 107 days left in the year.

**Today's Highlight in History:** On September 15, 1940, during the World War II Battle of Britain, the tide turned as the Royal Air Force inflicted heavy losses upon the Luftwaffe.

**On this date:** In 1789, the U.S. Department of Foreign Affairs was renamed the Department of State.

In 1895, William Howard Taft — who served as President of the United States and as U.S. chief justice — was born in Cincinnati, Ohio.

In 1890, English mystery writer Agatha Christie was born in Torquay.

In 1935, the Nuremberg Laws deprived German Jews of their citizenship.

In 1950, during the Korean conflict, United Nations forces landed at Incheon in the south and began their drive toward Seoul.

In 1955, the novel "Lolita," by Vladimir Nabokov, was first published in Paris.

In 1963, four black girls were killed when a bomb went off during Sunday services at the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. (Three Ku Klux Klansmen were eventually convicted for their roles in the blast.)

In 1965, the TV shows "Lost in Space" and "Green Acres" premiered on CBS.

In 1972, a federal grand jury in Washington indicted seven men in connection with the Watergate break-in.

In 1985, Nike began selling its "Air Jordan 1" sneaker.

In 1994, a tape recording of John Lennon singing with his teen-age band, The Quarrymen, in a Liverpool club on July 6, 1957, was sold at Sotheby's for \$122,500 (it was at this gig that Lennon first met Paul McCartney).

In 2000, the 2000 Summer Olympics opened in Sydney, Australia, with a seemingly endless parade of athletes and coaches and a spectacular display; Aborigine runner Cathy Freeman ignited an Olympic ring of fire.

**Ten years ago:** President George W. Bush, addressing the nation from storm-ravaged New Orleans, acknowledged the government had failed to respond adequately to Hurricane Katrina, and urged Congress to approve a massive reconstruction program. Hurricane Ophelia continued to lash the Outer Banks of

North Carolina with rain and wind. Producer Sid Luft, who was credited with reviving the career of then-wife Judy Garland, died in Santa Monica, California, at age 89.

**Five years ago:** A mortar attack by Palestinian militants and airstrikes by Israel provided a grim backdrop as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas ended their latest round of peace talks still divided on major issues.

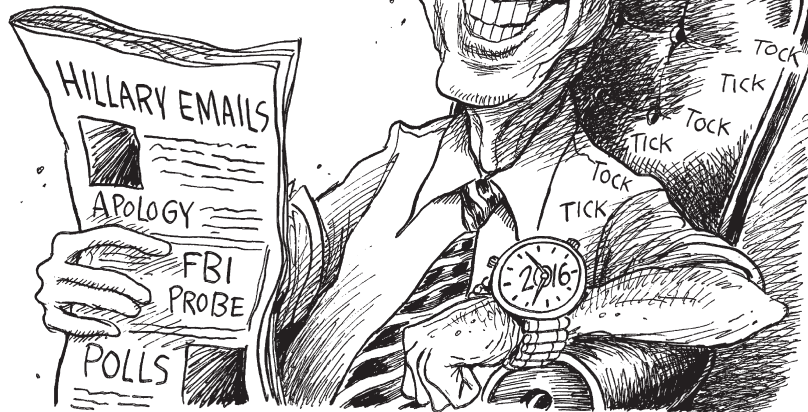
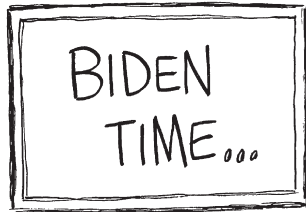
**One year ago:** U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, in Paris for an international meeting of diplomats, said he wouldn't shut the door on the possibility of working with Iran against a common enemy in the Islamic State militant group, but that the two nations would not coordinate on military action. Hurricane Odile blazed a trail of destruction through Mexico's Baja California Peninsula that leveled everything from ramshackle homes to luxury hotels and big-box stores. Two Vietnam War soldiers received the Medal of Honor from President Barack Obama in a White House ceremony, nearly 50 years after they'd thrown themselves into harm's way to protect their brothers in combat. (Army Command Sgt. Maj. Bennie G. Adkins eventually received his injuries; Army Spc. Donald P. Sloat did not.)

**Today's Birthdays:** Actor Forrest Compton is 90. Comedian Norm Crosby is 88. Actor Henry Darrow is 82. Baseball Hall-of-Famer Gaylord Perry is 77. Actress Carmen Maura is 70. Opera singer Jessye Norman is 70. Writer-director Ron Shelton is 70. Actor Tommy Lee Jones is 69. Movie director Oliver Stone is 69. Rock musician Kelly Keagy (Night Ranger) is 63. Rock musician Mitch Dorge (Crash Test Dummies) is 55. Football Hall of Famer Dan Marino is 54. Actor Danny Nucci is 47. Rap DJ Kay Gee is 46. Actor Josh Charles is 44. Singer Ivette Sosa (Eden's Crush) is 39. Actor Tom Hardy is 38. Actress Marisa Ramirez (TV: "Blue Bloods") is 38. Pop-rock musician Zach Filkins (OneRepublic) is 37. Actor Dave Annable is 36. Actress Amy Davidson is 36. Britain's Prince Harry is 31. TV personality Heidi Montag is 29. Actress Kate Mansi is 28.

**Thought for Today:** "It is a curious thought, but it is only when you see people looking ridiculous that you realize just how much you love them." — Dame Agatha Christie (1890-1976).

**FROM THE BIBLE**

God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Corinthians 1:9. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.



**The Rez of the Story**

## A Look At Ethics In Tribal Government

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives),

This week I call your attention to information brought to you by Sue Woodrow, who wrote a piece in the "Community Dividend,"

published by the Community Affairs Department of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis which can be contacted at www.minneapolisfed.org. The piece, "Ethics As A Building Block Of Economic Growth: Global Insights And Indian Country Model" raises many pivotal issues surrounding economic development in Indian Country.

To quote Sue, "Over the last few decades, the movement by Native nations in the United States to rebuild complete systems of self-determined government has been impressive."

The article talks about a "... crucial aspect of good governance: an effective institutional framework to encourage and manage ethical behavior in both the public and private sectors."

So what is ethics anyway? The dictionary definition says that ethics "is the study of morality's effect on conduct: the study of moral standards and how they affect conduct."

Woodrow writes: "Hardly a day goes by without news of persons in business or the public sector who are embroiled in scandals over alleged ethics violations, sometimes rising to the level of criminal activity (i.e. corruption). Whether single incidents or longstanding practices, unethical behaviors erode trust in leaders and the institutions they represent."

"Trust is at the heart of good governance, and good governance, in both the corporate and public sectors, promotes sustainable business growth. The lack of reliable, transparent, and consistent governance is a powerful disincentive to invest or otherwise do business."

"In tribal jurisdictions, as elsewhere, public servants continually face situations that raise ethical dilemmas. For example, should they give preference in hiring or contracting to relatives? Deny business-related land lease applications submitted by political opponents? Or misuse or misappropriate monies or property in tough financial times? Many tribes have adopted ethics codes or rules of conduct pertaining to these and other matters, but they vary in how detailed they are, whether they are rules or guidelines, whom the standards

apply to, what entities have oversight, what the penalties for violations are, and how the penalties are determined and enforced. While some tribal ethics systems are well developed and well managed, others are quite limited.

"For example, 'The Navaho Nation ... has developed ... an Ethics and Rules Office and Committee [which] implement the tribe's Ethics in Government law and are entrusted with assuring accountability among elected officials and tribal employees."

"Other tribes have established similar offices or commissions. Many have been or are in the context of constitutional reform. For example, the Blackfeet Nation in Montana has undertaken a significant constitutional reform initiative. In one recent development, the reform committee reached a consensus to recommend adoption of a four-branch form of government."

"American Indian Economic Development presented an award to the Animal O'odham/Pee-Posh Youth Council of the Gila River Indian Community in Arizona. The Youth Council, among its many recognized accomplishments, had established a Code of Ethics that strictly forbids alcohol and drug use, gang participation, and inappropriate behavior."

"Here are just a few examples of tribal leadership and members taking action steps toward insisting upon doing what's right by the people. Good tribal government means fostering an environment that stimulates and nurtures sustainable economic development."

"A formalized ethics regime ensures that all stakeholders know and understand the rules and expectations. In addition to containing written rules that reflect important cultural values, good ethics systems typically include well-publicized and trusted reporting mechanisms, incentives for compliance, protections against retaliation and false or frivolous claims, independent or otherwise trusted investigation processes, impartially applied sanctions, consistent enforcement, and stakeholder training and awareness. Each is crucial; together, they promote an environment of transparency, predictability, and accountability."

And now you know the rez of the story. Doksha (later) ...



Vince TWO EAGLES

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**A Reliable Energy Source?**

Ed VanGerpen, Avon  
Former state legislator

I would like to respond to the column, "SD and Wind Energy." (Press & Dakotan, Sept. 2) The writer has done his homework and I thank him for his honesty.

After reading the letter, I did not see a lot of very important words — "reliable" or "dependable." We don't have wind 100 percent of the time. A recent report stated wind turbines produced power 34 percent of the time in 2014.

I live on the north edge of Avon and can see 10 wind turbines from my living room. The blades aren't always turning. Wind power is not a source of energy to provide 24/7 power to customers.

**P&D LETTER POLICY**

The PRESS & DAKOTAN invites its readers to write letters to the editor. We ask that a few simple guidelines be followed:

- Please limit letters to 300 words or less. Letters should deal with a single subject, be of general interest and state a specific point of view. Letters are edited with brevity, clarity and newspaper style in mind.

- In the sense of fairness and professionalism, the PRESS & DAKOTAN will accept no letters attacking private individuals or businesses.

How many of us would buy a car that only ran 34 percent of the time, or fly in an airplane that only ran 34 percent of the time. I could support wind power if there was a place to store electricity.

Growing up on the farm, we used a windmill to fill a storage tank so the livestock would have 24/7. We could not depend on wind 24/7.

Isn't it interesting that when farmers got REA, one of the first items they bought was a pump jack to replace the windmill so they wouldn't have to depend on wind?

I would like to close my letter with this quote. "Those who refuse to learn from history are destined to fail."

**EMPOWERMENT:** "Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter." — Thomas Jefferson

**FREEDOM OF THE PRESS: It's Your Right To Know!**