

Hippies

Judge Franich Rules No Welfare For Longhair

Judge Charles Franich has made it official: a man who refuses to cut his long hair and beard in order to get a job can't expect society to support him with welfare money.

The judge filed his decision this week, ruling against Ronald D. Pratte, 27-year-old father from Boulder Creek.

Pratte, through attorney Ernie Fox of the Legal Aid Society, had charged welfare officials discriminated against him because of his long hair. He had brought suit in Superior Court.

He claimed he was willing to take any job if offered to him, but in court testimony welfare officials said he was unemployable.

In his decision, the Superior Court judge noted that Pratte wore his waist-length hair tied in a braid behind his back, and had a

beard best described as "spikey."

"At least two employers with jobs available advised him (Pratte) if he would cut his hair shorter and trimmed his beard, they would give him employment. The petitioner has refused to do this," Judge Franich said.

A third employer would have hired Pratte as he was, but there was a question whether Pratte had been really prompt in seeking the job, the judge noted.

"It appears he is reluctant to take a position unless it is in cartooning or pertaining thereto," Judge Franich said.

The judge said Pratte had other "administrative remedies" to follow in fighting his case, but Franich had agreed to hear it in court because the emergency food given to

(Continued on Page 2)

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(Continued from Page 1)

Pratte would have run out before an administrative hearing could be held.

Pratte moved here from Pennsylvania. He was denied welfare on Sept. 14. Under a temporary arrangement, he was given food and \$147 a month to end Oct. 31 after the case went to court.

During court hearings Oct. 22, the judge had made it clear what his decision would be. In a sharp rebuke to Pratte's arguments, he said, "for anyone, regardless of race, color, or creed, to voluntarily make himself unemployable, and then ask society to support him, is an absurd notion."