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Syms family, 1973-1997, undated.

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HUDSON
FINAL



THE HUDSON DISPATCH

Wants new divorce deal

Syms' ex-wife: Sy took me to cleaners

By PETER F. DONOHUE

The Hudson Dispatch

The estranged wife of Sy Syms, the Secaucus-based clothing magnate, is suing her former husband for \$92.4 million, alleging he lied about his assets when negotiating their divorce settlement.

Ruth Merns says the super-salesman underrepresented his wealth by more than \$170 million, and duped her into settling for \$3.1 million, according to papers filed in Hudson County Superior Court in Jersey City.

Syms "abused his superior knowledge of

marital assets and his superior bargaining power by taking unfair advantage over (Merns)" said the lawsuit, which was filed Tuesday.

Syms was surprised by the legal action.

"I wouldn't know about those figures," he said. "It was seven or eight years ago."

Merns, reached at her home in Fort Lee, referred all questions to her attorney, Robert D. Arenstein.

Arenstein was vacationing in Europe and couldn't be contacted.

Syms — who stars in his own commercials, touting the slogan: "An educated consumer is our best customer" — divorced Merns on Sept.

5, 1984, in Hudson County Superior Court.

Under the divorce settlement, Syms agreed to pay Merns \$3.1 million, according to court papers.

During the negotiations, Syms said he was worth \$13.6 million, including \$12.5 million in Syms Inc. stock, according to court papers.

But the lawsuit alleges Syms kept quiet about a 1983 transaction. Syms exchanged stock in Syms Inc. for holdings in Syms Corp. that was then valued at \$185 million, the lawsuit claims.

Merns and Syms were wed June 27, 1948,

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SYMS

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in The Bronx. Eleven years later, Syms opened his first store in Manhattan and began building a clothing empire.

The chain now has 27 stores in the East, Midwest and South, Syms said.

Syms Corp. tallied \$300 million in sales in 1989 and reported a net income of \$19.2 million.

In 1987, Syms was the 14th-highest-paid executive in New Jersey with an annual salary of \$844,139.

The couple has six children, including Marcy, now president and chief operations officer of Syms Corp.

Court papers say the couple split because of "unhappy and irreconcilable differences."



POST FOCUS ON METRO NEW YORK

O'Connor scrubs Sunday press meets

John Cardinal O'Connor, who often makes headlines with his informal Sunday news conferences, said yesterday he will no longer meet with reporters after Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral because of a demanding schedule.

Since being installed as New York archbishop in 1984, O'Connor has made a practice of meeting with reporters after the 10:15 a.m. Sunday Mass.

But because his Sunday schedule in the next few months is full, he will not talk to reporters after Mass, effective this Sunday and until further notice, according to a release issued by the archdiocese.

Archdiocese spokesman Joseph Zwilling said O'Connor's extensive Sunday schedule needed paring so he could meet other church responsibilities.

O'Connor will attempt to hold meetings with the press at other times, but "they won't be regularly scheduled," Zwilling said.



O'CONNOR

Syracuse rapist sentenced to 50 years

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (AP) — A local resident was sentenced yesterday to a maximum of 50 years in prison for raping and stabbing a female jogger.

State Supreme Court Justice Walter Gorman agreed with the prosecutor that Erwin Williams committed two separate crimes in September 1986 when he attacked the woman.

Williams, 23, was given back-to-back sentences of 8½ to 25 years for his conviction on first-degree rape and attempted-murder charges. He must serve a minimum of 16½ years in jail.

Before being sentenced, Williams told Gorman he was innocent and was convicted on "mere assumptions" and "tainted facts."

Feds wound drug suspect at La Guardia

A drug suspect was shot and wounded when he tried to run over a federal agent with a van during a cocaine bust at La Guardia Airport last night, police said.

Two men and a woman, who were not immediately identified, were arrested at the upper level of the parking garage.

Customs agents had arrested the 19-year-old woman in Miami after she was caught carrying a kilogram of cocaine, the Drug Enforcement Agency said.

She agreed to lead authorities to her confederates at La Guardia.

She met two men in a van at the garage. When the federal agents moved in, one of the men tried to run down a Customs agent. Other agents shot him in the foot.

John Harney

Ex-wife slaps Sy Syms with \$92.4M suit



SY SYMS

The former wife of clothing magnate Sy Syms says he was as good a salesman in divorce proceedings as he has been in his garment business, but she bought a lemon of a settlement.

Ruth Merns has sued Syms for \$92.4 million, alleging he lied about his assets when negotiating their 1984 divorce. She says he misrepresented his wealth by more than \$170 million and misled her into settling for \$3.1 million, according to court papers filed Tuesday in Superior Court in Jersey City.

Syms "abused his superior knowledge of marital assets and his superior bargaining power by taking unfair advantage," the suit charges.

AP

EMS worker wounded in mystery incident

An Emergency Medical Service technician was grazed in the head by either a bullet or a brick early yesterday morning as he headed to an emergency in Brooklyn, officials said.

The technician was a passenger when "some kind of missile came into the vehicle" at the Farragut Houses near the Brooklyn Navy Yard, EMS spokesman Bob Leonard said of the 3:24 a.m. incident.

The object grazed the left ear of the technician, who was taken to Long Island Hospital and listed in stable condition.

There was gunfire at the scene when the technician was hit, but circumstances led police, who found brick fragments near the ambulance, to question whether he was hit by a bullet.

AP

Ex-NYSE exec William S. Hughes dies

SAN MARINO, Calif. (AP) — William Silent Hughes, a former governor of the New York Stock Exchange and president of the investment banking firm Wagenseller & Durst, Inc., has died. He was 84.

Hughes died Sunday at his San Marino home of degenerative heart disease and complications of old age, the Los Angeles Times reported yesterday.

Homeless man stabbed in IND fracas

A homeless man was stabbed in the stomach on a Queens subway train yesterday, Transit Police said.

Maurice Sarat, 27, underwent surgery at Elmhurst Hospital for his injury. He was expected to live.

Transit Police said Sarat was involved in a dispute with an unidentified Hispanic man in his 30s aboard the southbound F train at about 11:15 a.m.

The assailant got off the train at Roosevelt Avenue and fled.

Rocco Parascandola

Nassau County vice cops get bed and bawd

Nassau cops raiding some alleged massage parlors picked up more than just suspected prostitutes — they also made off with the establishments' 50 beds.

"We seized the beds in order to keep them out of business for as long as possible," police spokesman Sgt. Richard Snizek said.

Police said they arrested 14 women at the parlors late Wednesday.

The massage parlors covered 10 Nassau County communities.

In addition to the beds, police seized \$7,200 in cash.

The alleged hookers, mostly Korean, range in age from

their early 20's to mid 40's.

According to police, immigration officials joined vice-squad cops and took an illegal Brazilian alien into custody.

The ladies were charged with unlawful practice of massage and prostitution.

Charles Sussman

APPELLATE PANEL RIPS 'COERCIVE' JUDGE

By HAL DAVIS
and MARSHA KRANES

A veteran New York judge was reprimanded yesterday for "coercing" a guilty plea from a teenager charged with attempted murder by convincing him the jury was about to convict him.

A five-judge Appellate Division panel unanimously found that Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Harold Rothwax "induced" a 17-year-old to plead guilty to a lesser charge in June 1989 by telling him the jury was leaning toward conviction.

Not only was the judge's information about jury deliberations wrong, the



HAROLD ROTHWAX
"Induced" a guilty plea.

panel said, but his decision to pass that information along to the teenager, Clifford Randall, was "inexplicable."

The panel barred further prosecution of Randall, who is now free.

Rothwax's actions grew out of an observation a court officer made when the jurors were on a dinner break.

From the way the jurors were seated and interacting during a dinner break, it looked like they were split 10-2.

When they returned to court, Rothwax — who presided over the Joel Steinberg case — asked the officer how things were going. The officer told him the panel appeared to be split 10-2 for

conviction. But the split was 10-2 for acquittal.

Rothwax immediately called Randall and his lawyer to his chambers and passed along the officer's misinformation.

Jackson pleaded guilty to criminal use of a firearm in exchange for a 4½-year term, and Rothwax dismissed the jury.

When Rothwax learned the true status of the deliberations, he agreed to let Jackson withdraw his plea, but refused to throw out the case when the teen's lawyer argued that a retrial would be double jeopardy.



3 IF BY SEA: A tantalizing trio of Miss America contestants tries out deep-sea fishing poles at an Atlantic City boat show during a break from preliminaries yesterday. From left: Lynette Falls (New Jersey), Kristi Cooke (Ohio), Suzanne Lawrence (Texas). A new queen will be crowned Saturday night.

Associated Press

U.S. sues to stop mob-linked bosses from running union

The federal government filed suit yesterday to keep bosses with alleged organized-crime ties from running one of the city's largest construction unions.

Four top officials from the District Council of Carpenters, which represents more than 30,000 carpenters, were named.

They are Paschal McGuinness, president; Irving Zeidman, first vice president; Frederick Devine, second vice president; and Francis McHale, secretary-treasurer.

The suit also named six Genovese family members, including three capos and jailed crime boss Anthony "Fat Tony" Salerno.

The papers ask that court-appointed trustees be placed in charge of the unions until all mob influence is erased.

"These crimes have been committed for more than 20 years," said James Fox, head of the local FBI office. "The people who have been committing these crimes are union leaders."

According to papers filed in federal court under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) statute, union leaders "got enormous sums of money ... for union peace," according to Fox.

Payoffs allowed contractors to bypass union agreements.

Contractors who did not fall in line were intimidated by economic coercion, threats and violence, according to the suit.

None of the officials faces jail time if convicted.

Peter Moses

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opening day of the conference will feature a computer users' exchange session, at which representatives from computer companies and retailers who have developed and used software packages will be available for informal discussions.

At roundtable discussions, retailers will have the opportunity to review and discuss the financial groups' 1982 annual business survey results, which

Chan, who has joined Stores as an assistant buyer men's sportswear. Chan worked at Pebble Beach for five years. Best's post is new.

Kunimura comes from Liberty House-California, where she was assistant buyer, men's better sportswear. Best comes from J. Lincoln, Ltd., a San Leandro, Calif.-based manufacturer which mainly imports private label sportswear for both the men's and women's market.

OBITUARIES

George Merns Dies at 72

NEW YORK — Services for George Merns, 72, will be held Sunday at noon at the Riverside Memorial Chapel, Amsterdam Avenue at 76th Street here.

Merns died Wednesday at St. Vincent's Hospital following a long illness.

Merns founded his own retail business in 1938, today known as Merns, Inc., and continued as president until 1972. At that time Merns became chairman and was succeeded as president by his son, E. Michael Merns, who had helped him expand the business from one to four stores.

Merns is survived by his son, Michael; a daughter, Ellen Chlouverakis; a brother, Sy Syms, who is president of the Syms chain of off-price stores, and five grandchildren.

The family has requested that

donations be made to the Heart Fund.

William Wunder

CHICAGO — A memorial service will be held Monday for William L. Wunder, 59, a former senior men's apparel buyer at Sears Roebuck. The service will be held at 2 p.m. at Trinity Church in Wilmette, Ill. Wunder died May 13 in Glendale Heights Community Hospital.

Wunder joined Sears as a management trainee in 1950. He held a number of buying positions in the company, spending the last seven years in men's sportswear. When he retired in December 1980, he was national buyer of sweaters.

After retiring from Sears, Wunder formed a consulting firm, Wunder Enterprises, Inc., assisting manufacturers in dealing with retailers.

Survivors include his widow Linda, a daughter and three sons.

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Bernie Miller is not associated with DNR, and his views are not necessarily those of DNR.

Bernie Miller's

update

Bruce Roberts told me that Raquel Welch asked him out once. He was in her room at the time.

I want to remind my legion of readers that this column is sponsored (that means paid for) by the good people at APRIL-MARCUS. They believe the industry deserves it!

Chatterbox ... First rate scoop: Bill Blass refused to license his name for a collection of designer caskets and Geoffrey Beene turned down dental floss ... Sy Syms and Lynn Tamarkin married yesterday in a private ceremony but plan an extravagant reception next March 30th. Sy chose that date because it also commemorates his late Mother's birthday ... The blissful merger of Belle and Leon Atkind has produced fifteen grandchildren so far. And they all wear shoes ... "Marvelous" Marvin Blumenfeld attributes his new physique to his training regime at the Cardio-Fitness Center ... Sol (Grodins) Salk shaved off his 30 year old mustache the same day Paul Wattenberg observed that he resembled Herb Sendik ... The 54 fired-up members of the Kayser-Roth alumni, who ceremoniously reunited recently, represented an average of 20.5 years with that company ... Dick (Drexler) Leibowitz's cherished Cheryl announced her engagement to Stephen Auerbach ... The N.C.C.J. Luncheon was yet another superb affair thanks to the administrations of Murray Harris and exceptional acceptance speeches by the honorees, "Bud" Leventhal and Larry Shelton ... Still handicapped by a paralytic stroke, Danny Raabin spent a three hour visit at Barneys with Fred Pressman, lunched in the Cafe', and was transported home in a chauffeured limo. Dan has appointed himself as president of the Fred Pressman Fan Club of which there are many members ... and that's a nice note to end the week on.

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represented and the hibiscus and orchids were in full bloom while the palm trees waved over the lagoon. A new entry in this area appeared to be a Japanese-Hawaii hybrid such as bamboo leaves or other

cottons or cotton colors.

Of particular interest to men was the tailored apparel including suits, jackets and slacks which was shown in silk-look fabrics in a dupioni type with a low luster.

3 in Running At Farah for Williams' Post

Continued from Page 2

Farah said that four top offices, not including his, will be created. He said he has not decided on the exact wording of the titles, but added that they will include a chief operating officer, a president for domestic operations, a president for international operations and a chief financial officer/treasurer. "We're not title-minded," Farah said.

Richard L. Jaeger, currently senior vice-president for finance and treasurer, will be named senior vice-president, chief financial officer and treasurer, Farah said. He added that Jim Swain, formerly with the accounting firm of Arthur Andersen, will be named vice-president for finance and will handle financial operations for Farah to allow Jaeger to handle corporate financial duties, including Generra Sportswear Co., Inc., of Seattle, which Farah acquired in September.

Steve Miska, president of Generra, will be named to the company's board, Farah said.

of the ... been fine ... of detailed decisions are hammered out ... 1984. Schweiter, state that it is con- sale of some rea- Grob, particularly si- excessive floor cap- both the manufactur- administrative areas. Also, Schweiter and "have agreed to incor- in Horgen a new subsidiary for the ma- turing division which so-

Bill Bigler Re

NEWARK, N.J. — Bill Bigler has been named vice-president and men's fashion director at Bamberger's, rejoining the company after he left one year ago to join Bloomingdale's in a similar capacity.

No replacement has been named at Bloomingdale's.

Bigler will take his new position Nov. 12 and will report to Markfield, senior vice-president and director of merchandising.

Bigler, who joined Bamberger's in 1981 as an administrator and