

Public Christmas Displays and *Lynch v. Donnelly*

Overview

In this lesson, students will consider the implications of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment by learning about the landmark Supreme Court case *Lynch v. Donnelly*. Through the documentary of *Lynch v. Donnelly*, students will begin to examine whether or not a Christmas display on government property violates the US Constitution. Students will continue their exploration of the issue by comparing the *Lynch v. Donnelly* to a similar situation at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The lesson culminates in mock community meeting where students assume different roles and argue whether or not holiday displays should be allowed at UNC.

Grade

9-12

Course

Civics and Economics
US History

North Carolina Standard Course of Study for Civics and Economics

- Objective 2.01: Identify principles in the United States Constitution.
- Objective 2.03: Explain how the United States Constitution grants and limits the authority of public officials and government agencies.
- Objective 2.06: Analyze court cases that demonstrate how the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights protect the rights of individuals.
- Objective 5.06: Analyze roles of individual citizens, political parties, the media, and other interest groups in public policy decisions, dispute resolution, and government action.

North Carolina Standard Course of Study for US History

- Objective 12.02: Evaluate the impact of recent constitutional amendments, court rulings, and federal legislation on United States' citizens.

Materials

- Establishment Clause warm up (attached)
- Wall images (attached)
- Documentary of *Lynch v. Donnelly* (Voices of American Law DVD available at www.voicesofamericanlaw.org)
- *Lynch v. Donnelly* viewing guide (attached)
- "UNC-CH libraries leave Christmas trees in storage" article from the *News and Observer* (attached)
- Role play instructions for the following roles: Heels Against Trees, the Christmas Defense Coalition, Associate Provost for University Libraries, leader of UNC's College Republicans, and the Chancellor of UNC-Chapel Hill
- Establishment Clause and the Supreme Court handout (attached)
- Poster paper
- Pens, pencils, crayons, markers, colored pencils
- *Lynch v. Donnelly* decision handout (attached)

Essential Questions:

- How does the Bill of Rights offer protection for citizens?
- How are the rights granted in the Bill of Rights limited by interpretation of the judiciary branch?
- What is the Establishment Clause?
- What did Thomas Jefferson mean by "a wall of separation between Church & State?"
- What types of religious displays, if any, are permitted on public property?
- How does the government decide what impedes religious freedom and when religion should be restricted?

Duration

90 minutes

Student Preparation

- Option #1: An optional anticipatory homework activity is to assign the *Freedom from Religion Foundation's* "What Do You Know about the Separation of State and Church?" online quiz (<http://ffrf.org/quiz/ffrfquiz.php>) or a paper copy of the quiz (attached). This will give students a brief introduction to and get students thinking about the relationship between church and state throughout America's history. It can also be used as a tool to assess students' prior knowledge. Before assigning the quiz, students should be aware of the group's purpose. (Taken from the *Freedom from Religion Foundation's* website):
 - *The Freedom From Religion Foundation, Inc. is an educational group working for the separation of state and church. Its purposes, as stated in its bylaws, are to promote the constitutional principle of separation of state and church, and to educate the public on matters relating to nontheism.*It may be beneficial to discuss how this organization's point of view may affect the way the questions are posed. This point can be revisited later when discussing political polling.
- Option#2: Another optional anticipatory homework activity is to assign a "Freedom of Religion Quiz" from *NOW on PBS*; online quiz available online at <http://www.pbs.org/now/quiz/quiz2.html> and paper quiz attached. This will give students a brief introduction to and get students thinking about the relationship between church and state. It can also be used as a tool to assess students' prior knowledge.

Procedure

Warm Up: Religious Symbolism

1. Project or pass out the "Warm Up Images" handout (attached). Encourage students to examine the images for a minute and then have them identify them. The name of the image and the religion it is associated with are as follows:
 1. Yin and Yang – Daoism
 2. Christmas tree – Christianity
 3. Crescent Moon and Star – Islam
 4. Dradle – Judaism
 5. Ganesh – Hinduism
 6. Menorah – Judaism
 7. Nativity Scene – Christianity
 8. Star of David – Judaism
 9. Crucifix – Christianity
 10. Ten Commandments – Judaism and Christianity
2. Once students have identified all the symbols, pose the following questions to spark discussion:
 - How did you feel when viewing these symbols? Did any of these symbols offend you? If so, why?
 - When and where would you expect to see most of these symbols?
 - Where might be a "strange" place to see these symbols?
 - If you saw these symbols in a public place (park, school, government building, etc) would you be upset? Why or why not?
 - Have you ever heard the phrase "separation of church and state?" If so, where? What does it mean to you?

At this point, explain to students that the First Amendment to the US Constitution has a provision called the Establishment Clause which states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

- Now that everyone is familiar with the Establishment Clause, does this change your views of religious symbols in public places? Explain.

Facilitate a five or ten minute discussion leading students to think about the placement of religious symbols in public places and the Establishment Clause of the Constitution.

Teacher note: For an alternate warm up activity dealing with the Establishment Clause, access the Consortium's *Van Orden v. Perry* through the Database of Civic Resources at <http://www.civics.org>.

Documentary: *Lynch v. Donnelly*

3. Tell students that they are now going to watch a documentary which discusses the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. Tell them that they should pay close attention to the facts of the case and the arguments being presented. No further introduction is necessary for the documentary. The following basic facts are provided for your convenience and below are two options for how you may present the documentary. Do not reveal the Supreme Court's decision in regards to the case yet.
 - **Teacher Reference – Synopsis of the Case:**
Facts of the Case:
The city of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, annually erected a Christmas display located in the city's shopping district. The display included such objects as a Santa Claus house, a Christmas tree, a banner reading

"Seasons Greetings," and a nativity scene. The crèche had been included in the display for over 40 years. Daniel Donnelly objected to the display and took action against Dennis Lynch, the Mayor of Pawtucket.

- **Viewing Options**

There are two ways you can choose to have the class view the documentary.

- **Option 1:** You may choose to have the class watch the video with no pauses and have students work on the attached Viewing Guide while watching.
- **Option 2:** You may choose to pause the video at the times outlined below and ask the class to discuss the questions listed. Students may complete the questions below in addition to or instead of the questions on the Viewer's Guide.
 - **Discussion Point #1:** (Pause at 5:25)
 - How long was the display in Pawtucket?
 - Over 40 Years
 - Who is Dennis Lynch?
 - Former Mayor of Pawtucket
 - What were some of the symbols included in the Christmas display?
 - Christmas trees, Santa, Season's Greetings banner, talking wishing well, crèche/nativity
 - What symbol troubled people and why do you think the ACLU challenged it?
 - The crèche because it would seem that government is endorsing or sponsoring one religion.
 - **Discussion Point #2:** (Pause at 9:55, after explanation of the Lemon Test.)
 - How did most people in Rhode Island react to the lawsuit? Why do you think they reacted this way?
 - Most people supported Mayor Lynch and opposed the ACLU.
 - How did the ACLU respond to the public's criticisms?
 - The organization had Thomas Ramsbey, an ordained minister, draft a letter of support for the ACLU that was signed by various clergy members who opposed the display.
 - What is standing? How did the ACLU prove standing in this case?
 - Standing is the question of whether or not the individual suffered harm from someone else's behavior. The plaintiff had standing because they were a tax payer and their tax dollars helped pay for the display.
 - What is the Lemon Test?
 - A legal test to determine if an action violates the Establishment Clause.
 - **Discussion Point #3:** (Discuss at the conclusion of the documentary.)
 - Who paid for and maintained the display? Why do you think this was an important point for the case?
 - The taxpayers paid for the display and the city workers maintained it. This could be construed as government favoring one religion.
 - What was the secular purpose of the display according to the city?
 - The Christmas display was there to encourage people to come downtown and shop.
 - How did many members of Pawtucket's Jewish community react to the Christmas display?
 - They supported the Mayor Lynch.
 - According to ACLU members, what two ways the display demeaning to religion?
 - One way was the condition of the crèche. It was poorly maintained and that could be seen as disrespectful towards religion.
 - Another way was using a religious holiday to encourage shopping and gift giving.
 - Why was the context of the display important for the city's case? Why do you think this is important?
 - They argued that it was not the central theme of the display, but only a very small part of it.
 - Why were the letters of support sent to Mayor Lynch important for the ACLU's case?
 - The ACLU felt that the letters proved people associated the crèche display with religious ideas, not secular ones.
 - How do you think the Supreme Court ruled in this case?

UNC Libraries Remove Christmas Trees

4. After viewing and discussing the *Lynch v. Donnelly* documentary, pass out a copy of the *News & Observer* article titled "UNC-CH libraries leave Christmas trees in storage" (attached). Read the article aloud as a class. When finished ask the following questions:
 - How is this situation similar to the *Lynch v. Donnelly* case?
 - How is it different?
 - Do you agree with UNC's decision? Why or why not?

- If someone took this case to the Supreme Court of the United States, what do you think their decision would be? Why?
5. After discussing the UNC article, project or pass out the *Lynch v. Donnelly* ruling handout (attached).
- **Teacher Reference – Court’s Ruling**
In a 5-to-4 decision, the Court held that notwithstanding the religious significance of the crèche, the city had not violated the Establishment Clause. The Court found that the display, viewed in the context of the holiday season, was not a purposeful or surreptitious effort to advocate a particular religious message. The Court found that the display merely depicted the historical origins of the Holiday and had "legitimate secular purposes." The Court held that the symbols posed no danger of establishing a state church and that it was "far too late in the day to impose a crabbed reading of the [Establishment] Clause on the country."
Source: The Oyez Project, Lynch v. Donnelly, 465 U.S. 668 (1984) available at: http://oyez.org/cases/1980-1989/1983/1983_82_1256; last visited Wednesday, July 29, 2009.
6. Review with the class and ask the following questions:
- Do you agree with the Court’s decision? Why or why not?
 - Based upon the *Lynch v. Donnelly* decision, do you think the Supreme Court would consider the library Christmas tree a violation of the Establishment Clause?

Open Community Forum

7. Explain to students that the Chancellor of UNC has called an open community forum to address the controversy surrounding the removal of Christmas trees from UNC libraries. Students will be divided into the following roles:
- Heels Against Trees – A campus organization that supports the removal of the Christmas trees from UNC libraries
 - The Christmas Defense Coalition – A campus organization that opposes the removal of Christmas trees from UNC libraries
 - Sarah, the University's Associate Provost for University Libraries
 - UNC-Chapel Hill Chancellor
 - Derek, President of UNC College Republicans
8. Once students have been divided into groups pass out the role play instructions and a copy of the “Establishment Clause and the Supreme Court” handout (attached). Tell students to read their role play instructions out loud as a group. Next each group should read the “Establishment Clause and the Supreme Court” handout aloud. Encourage them to use information from the handout and the *Lynch v. Donnelly* documentary to support their positions. Finally, pass out poster paper and art supplies so students can create “protest” signs that convey their group’s message. Allow students fifteen to twenty minutes to complete their assigned role.
9. While students are working in groups, organize the room so that there are three chairs up front – one for Sarah, one for the Chancellor of UNC-Chapel Hill, and one for Derek. Thorp should be sitting in the middle because he will be moderating the discussion. Designate one half of the room for the Heels Against Trees and the other half for the Christmas Defense Coalition
10. After the allotted time, direct students to their appropriate area of the room. Explain that the community forum will work as follows:
- Chancellor’s Welcome
 - Sarah’s Opening Remarks
 - Derek’s Opening Remarks
 - Question and Answer Session
11. Once Sarah and Derek have presented their opening remarks, the Chancellor should choose students from either groups to ask questions of the panelists and fellow crowd members. Direct the Chancellor to start with either group (Heels Against Trees or Christmas Defense Coalition), then alternate between the two groups so each side gets equal time. Thorp should further moderate the discussion by limiting the amount of time each student can speak. At the conclusion of the discussion, Thorp should decide which side to support after hearing the each sides arguments. The teacher should be a passive observer throughout the community forum, unless there is an important point that needs to be further discussed.
12. Continue the community forum for approximately twenty minutes. Once you have finished ask the following debriefing questions:
- Do you think the Establishment Clause is an important protection? Why or why not?

- Do you feel that Christmas displays on public property violate the Establishment Clause?
- Do you think the Supreme Court would have decided differently if the display celebrated different faiths?
- Should the Supreme Court decide on a set test to decide if something violates the Establishment Clause or should the Justices decide on a case by case basis?
- Based upon the decisions various Establishment Clause cases provided, how do you think the Supreme Court would have decided in regards to the situation at UNC-Chapel Hill?

Additional Activities

- Hold a class debate about the legality of religious holidays and public schools.

Differentiation

Students with Special Needs

- Ensure mixed ability grouping
- Assign the viewing guide and pause every few minutes to debrief the students and allow them time to think about the questions.

AIG

- Have students read the Supreme Court's decision and write a letter to the editor expressing their support or opposition to the Court's reasoning.

Multiple Intelligences

Verbal-Linguistic
Body-kinesthetic
Interpersonal
Intrapersonal

Warm Up Images

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



Lynch v. Donnelly Viewing Guide

1. Who is Dennis Lynch and what did Christmastime mean to him? (:30)
2. What symbols did the Christmas display have? (1:05)
3. Where did the display move to and why did the mayor move it to the new location? (1:35)
4. What was the ACLU challenging in the *Lynch v. Donnelly* case? (5:00)
5. How did most Rhode Islanders react to the lawsuit? Why do you think they reacted this way? (5:00)
6. What did Mayor Lynch think that people in a community had the right to do? (6:00)
7. How did the ACLU respond to the public's criticism of the lawsuit? (7:40)
8. What is standing? How did the ACLU get standing in this case? (8:10)
9. In your own words, describe the Lemon Test? (9:30)
10. Who paid for and maintained the Christmas display? (10:00)
11. According to Ramsbey how was the display demeaning to religion? (11:20)
12. According to the city what was the secular purpose of the display? (13:25)
13. How did the ACLU challenge the city's secular purpose for the display? (14:35)
14. Why was the context of the display important for the city's argument? (15:05)
15. How did the ACLU use the letters of support for the mayor to help bolster their case? (15:30)

Lynch v. Donnelly Viewing Guide Answer Key

1. Who is Dennis Lynch and what did Christmastime mean to him? (:30)

Dennis Lynch is the former mayor of Pawtucket, RI. Christmas was a time of rebirth, happiness, joy, celebration.

2. What symbols did the Christmas display have? (1:05)

The symbols included Santa, talking wishing well, Christmas trees, a "Season's Greetings" banner, crèche/nativity.

3. Where did the display move to and why did the mayor move it to the new location? (1:35)

It was moved to a small park downtown. Urban renewal, encourage people to come downtown.

4. What was the ACLU challenging in the *Lynch v. Donnelly* case? (5:00)

The ACLU was challenging the government sponsoring a clear religious message by including the crèche in the display.

5. How did most Rhode Islanders react to the lawsuit? Why do you think they reacted this way? (5:45)

They criticized the ACLU and supported the mayor. Majority Catholic community, so the crèche was not offensive or disturbing to them.

6. What did Mayor Lynch think that people in a community had the right to do? (6:00)

Get together and establish local traditions.

7. How did the ACLU respond to the public's criticism of the lawsuit? (7:40)

Had Thomas Ramsbey draft a statement of support for the ACLU that was signed by many clergy members.

8. What is standing? How did the ACLU get standing in this case? (8:10)

The question of whether or not the person complaining was really harmed. The ACLU used taxes to determine standing.

9. In your own words, describe the Lemon Test? (9:30)

Controlled how governmental activities involving religion should be judged. It is a test to determine if the government violated the Establishment Clause.

10. Who paid for and maintained the Christmas display? (10:00)

The taxpayers paid for the display and city workers maintained it.

11. According to Ramsbey how was the display demeaning to religion? (11:20)

The display was not kept in good condition.

12. According to the city what was the secular purpose of the display? (13:25)

The secular purpose was to attract shoppers to the stores surrounding the display.

13. How did the ACLU challenge the city's secular purpose for the display? (14:35)

The ACLU argued that it is improper to use religion to promote shopping. Christmas isn't about buying presents and spending money, it is a religious celebration.

14. Why was the context of the display important for the city's argument? (15:05)

The context was important because the crèche was a small part of a larger display

15. How did the ACLU use the letters of support for the mayor to help bolster their case? (15:30)

Many of the letters of support invoked a religious message and that proved that people associated the display with religious ideas, not secular ones.



UNC-CH libraries leave Christmas trees in storage

Eric Ferreri, Staff Writer

CHAPEL HILL - For as long as anyone can remember, Christmas trees adorned with lights and ornaments have greeted holiday season visitors to UNC-Chapel Hill's two main libraries.

They aren't there this year.

The trees, which have stood in the lobby areas of Wilson and Davis libraries each December, were kept in storage this year at the behest of Sarah Michalak, the university's associate provost for university libraries.

Michalak's decision followed several years of queries and complaints from library employees and patrons bothered by the Christian display, Michalak said this week.

Michalak said that banishing the Christmas displays was not an easy decision but that she asked around to library colleagues at Duke, N.C. State and elsewhere and found no other one where Christmas trees were displayed.

Aside from the fact that a UNC-CH library is a public facility, Michalak said, libraries are places where information from all corners of the world and all belief systems is offered without judgment. Displaying Christian symbols is antithetical to that philosophy, she said.

"We strive in our collection to have a wide variety of ideas," she said. "It doesn't seem right to celebrate one particular set of customs."

Michalak, UNC-CH's chief librarian for four years, said at least a dozen library employees have complained over the last few years about the display. She hasn't heard similar criticism from students, though they may have voiced their concerns to other library staff.

Public libraries generally shy away from creating displays promoting any single religion, said Catherine Mau, deputy director of the Durham County library system, where poinsettias provided by a library booster group provide holiday cheer.

If religious or holiday-themed books are put on display in December, they tend to be broad in range and subject matter, she said.

"It's a conscious decision," Mau said. "We want everyone to feel welcome."

At UNC-CH, student Derek Belcher sees a case of political correctness running amok.

"I don't understand it," said Belcher, a senior from Havelock and president of the university's College Republicans. "We have Christmas as a federal holiday. If we're going to remove the Christmas tree, do we have to remove that holiday?"

Source: Ferreri, Eric. "UNC-CH Libraries Leave Christmas Trees in Storage." News & Observer. 05 2008 December. News & Observer. 27 Jul 2009 <<http://www.newsobserver.com/news/story/1321291.html>>.

The Establishment Clause and the Supreme Court

The following are Supreme Court cases that deal with the Establishment Clause. Use this handout to help create a case for the group you are supporting.

Stone v Graham

Facts of the Case:

Sydell Stone and a number of other parents challenged a Kentucky state law that required the posting of a copy of the Ten Commandments in each public school classroom. They filed a claim against James Graham, the superintendent of public schools in Kentucky.

Question:

Did the Kentucky statute violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment?

Conclusion:

In a 5-to-4 per curiam decision, the Court ruled that the Kentucky law violated the first part of the test established in *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, and thus violated the Establishment Clause of the Constitution. The Court found that the requirement that the Ten Commandments be posted "had no secular legislative purpose" and was "plainly religious in nature." The Court noted that the Commandments did not confine themselves to arguably secular matters (such as murder, stealing, etc.), but rather concerned matters such as the worship of God and the observance of the Sabbath Day.

Source: The Oyez Project, Stone v. Graham, 449 U.S. 39 (1980) available at: (http://oyez.org/cases/1980-1989/1980/1980_80_321) (last visited Friday, July 10, 2009).

McCreary County v. ACLU

Facts of the Case:

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) sued three Kentucky counties in federal district court for displaying framed copies of the Ten Commandments in courthouses and public schools. The ACLU argued the displays violated the First Amendment's establishment clause, which prohibits the government from passing laws "respecting an establishment of religion." The district court and the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled the displays violated the establishment clause.

Questions:

1. Do Ten Commandments displays in public schools and in courthouses violate the First Amendment's establishment clause, which prohibits government from passing laws "respecting an establishment of religion?"
2. Was a determination that the displays' purpose had been to advance religion sufficient for the displays' invalidation?

Conclusion:

Yes and yes. In a 5-4 opinion delivered by Justice David Souter, the majority held that the displays violated the establishment clause because their purpose had been to advance religion. In the case of each of the displays, the Court held, an observer would have concluded that the government was endorsing religion. The first display for presenting the Ten Commandments in isolation; the second for showing the Commandments along with other religious passages; the third for presenting the Commandments in a presentation of the "Foundations of American Law," an exhibit in which the county reached "for any way to keep a religious document on the walls of courthouses."

Source: The Oyez Project, McCreary County v. ACLU, 545 U.S. ____ (2005) available at: (http://oyez.org/cases/2000-2009/2004/2004_03_1693) (last visited Friday, July 10, 2009).

Van Orden v. Perry

Facts of the Case:

Thomas Van Orden sued Texas in federal district court, arguing a Ten Commandments monument on the grounds of the state capitol building represented an unconstitutional government endorsement of religion. Orden argued this violated the First Amendment's establishment clause, which prohibits the government from passing laws "respecting an establishment of religion." The district court and the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against Orden and said the monument served a valid secular purpose and would not appear to a reasonable observer to represent a government endorsement of religion.

Question:

Does a Ten Commandments monument on the grounds of a state capitol building violate the First Amendment's establishment clause, which barred the government from passing laws "respecting an establishment of religion?"

Conclusion:

No. In 5-4 decision, and in a four-justice opinion delivered by Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist, the Court held that the establishment clause did not bar the monument on the grounds of Texas' state capitol building. The plurality deemed the Texas monument part of the nation's tradition of recognizing the Ten Commandments' historical meaning. Though the Commandments are religious, the plurality argued, "simply having religious content or promoting a message consistent with a religious doctrine does not run afoul of the establishment clause."

Source: *The Oyez Project, Van Orden v. Perry*, 545 U.S. ____ (2005) available at: (http://oyez.org/cases/2000-2009/2004/2004_03_1500) (last visited Tuesday, July 7, 2009).

Allegheny v. ACLU

Facts of the Case:

Two public-sponsored holiday displays in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, were challenged by the American Civil Liberties Union. The first display involved a Christian nativity scene inside the Allegheny County Courthouse. The second display was a large Chanukah menorah, erected each year by the Chabad Jewish organization, outside the City-County building. The ACLU claimed the displays constituted state endorsement of religion. This case was decided together with *Chabad v. ACLU* and *City of Pittsburgh v. ACLU of Greater Pittsburgh*.

Question:

Did the public displays violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment?

Conclusion:

In a 5-to-4 decision, the Court held that the crèche inside the courthouse unmistakably endorsed Christianity in violation of the Establishment Clause. By prominently displaying the words "Glory to God for the birth of Jesus Christ," the county sent a clear message that it supported and promoted Christian orthodoxy. The Court also held, however, that not all religious celebrations on government property violated the Establishment Clause. Six of the justices concluded that the display involving the menorah was constitutionally legitimate given its "particular physical setting."

Source: *The Oyez Project, Allegheny v. ACLU*, 492 U.S. 573 (1989) available at: (http://oyez.org/cases/1980-1989/1988/1988_87_2050) (last visited Tuesday, July 7, 2009).

Lynch v Donnelly Decision

In a 5-to-4 decision, the Court held that notwithstanding the religious significance of the crèche, the city had not violated the Establishment Clause. The Court found that the display, viewed in the context of the holiday season, was not a purposeful or surreptitious effort to advocate a particular religious message. The Court found that the display merely depicted the historical origins of the Holiday and had "legitimate secular purposes." The Court held that the symbols posed no danger of establishing a state church and that it was "far too late in the day to impose a crabbed reading of the [Establishment] Clause on the country."

Source:

The Oyez Project, *Lynch v. Donnelly*, 465 U.S. 668 (1984) available at: (http://oyez.org/cases/1980-1989/1983/1983_82_1256) (last visited Wednesday, July 29, 2009).

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Heels Against Trees</u></p> <p>Heels Against Trees are a campus organization that supports the removal of Christmas trees from UNC libraries. This group favors a strict separation of church and state. They feel that no religious holidays should be celebrated or recognized by UNC because it is a public institution, paid for by the taxpayers of the state.</p> <p>Your job as a member of this group is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find a partner and create a protest sign that supports your viewpoint. It should be colorful and creative. • Write one question to ask the panelists. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Christmas Defense Coalition</u></p> <p>The Christmas Defense Coalition is a campus organization that opposes the removal of Christmas trees from UNC libraries. This group favors a separation of church and state but feels that it is ok if they intermingle sometimes. This group is open to other religious holidays being celebrated in public places because they feel it is part of our shared history as Americans.</p> <p>Your job as a member of this group is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find a partner and create a protest sign that supports your viewpoint. It should be colorful and creative. • Write one question to ask the panelists. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Sarah</u></p> <p>Sarah is UNC’s Associate Provost for Libraries. She is the one who made the decision to keep the Christmas trees in storage this year. Re-read the “UNC-CH libraries leave Christmas trees in storage” article to understand her reasons for the decision.</p> <p>Your job as Sarah is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write a two-minute defense of your decision that will present to the community forum. • answer questions presented by the participants of the community forum. You should pretend that you are Sarah when answering the questions and not allow your own feelings to influence your answers.
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Derek</u></p> <p>Derek is the leader of the UNC College Republicans. He is the one who made the decision to keep the Christmas trees in storage this year. Re-read the “UNC-CH libraries leave Christmas trees in storage” article to understand her reasons for the decision.</p> <p>Your job as Derek is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write a two minute defense of your decision that will present to the community forum. • answer questions presented by the participants of the community forum. You should pretend that you are Derek when answering the questions and not allow your own feelings to influence your answers. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Chancellor of UNC-CH</u></p> <p>The Chancellor of UNC has decided to hold a community forum meeting to address the concerns regarding the absence of Christmas trees in the UNC libraries. Read the attached statement by the Chancellor regarding the Christmas tree controversy to help with your welcoming remarks.</p> <p>Your job as Chancellor is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write a two-minute opening speech explaining the purpose of the forum. Be sure to explain why you feel this exchange of ideas is important. • moderate the discussion by choosing who asks questions and determining how long each point can be discussed. 	

Chancellor Holden Thorp's Statement Surrounding the Christmas Tree Controversy

I understand that the Library staff made the decision not to put up a Christmas tree this year after giving it a lot of thought. The university administration doesn't get involved in decisions like that. Departments can choose to put up a tree or not. And if you take a walk across campus, I think you'll see that.

The façade of Memorial Hall, our major performing venue, is fully decorated for the holiday, and The Nutcracker is its major December attraction. Student Stores is like any retailer this time of year. They have a tree decorated with Carolina ornaments in the window and, in the store, there is a mantle decorated with Carolina stockings. The Student Activities Fund Office has a Christmas tree in its window.

There's a big Christmas wreath with a Carolina-blue ribbon on it in the Student Union. Our own Carolina Inn is again featuring its Twelve Days of Christmas displays throughout the hotel. And just as we have for the last 59 years, our Morehead Planetarium and Science Center is featuring The Star of Bethlehem.

So Christmas is recognized on this campus.

Thanks for your interest in Carolina, and have a joyous Christmas season.

Holden Thorp

Source:

Ferreri, Eric. "Campus Notes: UNC's Thorp responds on Christmas Tree Issue." *News & Observer*. 05 December 2008. News & Observer. 29 Jul 2009 <<http://blogs.newsobserver.com/campusnotes/uncs-thorp-responds-on-christmas-tree-issue>>.