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FATHERS RATE BETTER DEAL FROM SOCIETY, SAYS UD PROF

DAYTON, Ohio -- Society makes a big fuss about observing Father's Day each year, but in actuality the father is the most vulnerable member of the family organization, and his role is the least protected by current legal and social practice, according to an English professor at the University of Dayton.

"American society frequently tells fathers that they are second-class parents," says Eugene R. August. "For example, abortion laws designate the expectant mother as the sole parent who decides whether the child lives or dies. The law tells the expectant father, 'It is her child. She can do with it as she chooses. The father has no right to interfere.'"

August is also a pioneer in the new field of men's studies.

"Have you ever noticed that the pro-choice people are talking about choice for expectant mothers only, never for expectant fathers?" he asks. "The expectant father is required by law to go along with the expectant mother's choice."

August reserves his strongest criticisms for "anti-male and anti-father prejudices on some college campuses. Campus liberals who have protested everything else have never protested the discrimination against fathers in the awarding of child custody."
"Discussion of parenthood on too many campuses is dominated by a feminist ideology that despises fathers and romanticizes the fatherless home, such as single-mother and lesbian households."

August believes this ideology is summed up in a passage from Adrienne Rich's book Of Women Born: "The mother-child relationship is the essential human relationship. In the creation of the patriarchal family, violence is done to this fundamental relationship."

For an opposing viewpoint, August refers to a recent book by Daniel Amneus, The Garbage Generation, in which the author contends that the fatherless family is inordinately pathological: Such families produce a disproportionately large number of abused, troubled and destructive children.

August, the author of a bibliography titled "Men's Studies," argues that college campuses need more "male-positive and father-positive courses" in men's studies. He is particularly critical of "political correctness" on campus, which he says amounts to "sexual and racial harassment of straight white males."

August also cites the need for men's rights organizations such as the National Coalition of Free Men.

"Until we change some attitudes toward fathers, Father's Day may be little more than a charade," he says.

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To set up media interviews with Eugene August, call Jim Feuer, director of media relations, at (513) 229-3241.