

Judge declares dog is dangerous

An Australian shepherd could be first Richmond entry on state registry

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An Australian shepherd that chased, bit, nipped and scratched a jogger in July could be among the first Richmond dogs placed on the state's new Dangerous Dog Registry.

Judge David Eugene Cheek of Richmond Circuit Court said yesterday that he did not blame or want to punish the dog, Godiva, who he said was just being herself.

Nor, he said, did he want to blame or punish the owner, Sheila Carapico, a University of Richmond political-science professor, whom he called a hero for adopting the dog from an animal shelter and for going to great lengths to protect her.

But, he said, the law is there to protect the public, and he declared that the dog, in his opinion, is dangerous.

Carapico said after yesterday's court hearing that she is not sure she can keep Godiva now because it may be too expensive. Among other things, the law requires an owner of a dog declared dangerous to maintain \$100,000 in liability insurance or post a \$100,000 surety bond.

Carapico said she has appealed the decision. She said she has taken the dog to the city pound, where she will remain for the time being.

"I just think we're getting into an environment where nobody is going to adopt a rescue dog because they'll lose their homeowner's insurance," she said.

If Godiva ultimately winds up on the registry, the dog's photo will be placed on the canine equivalent of the state's Sex Offender Registry, along with her owner's name and address, all posted on the Internet.



Godiva, an Australian shepherd adopted from a shelter by University of Richmond political-science professor Sheila Carapico, has legally been declared dangerous. In this photo, Godiva relaxes with 7-year-old Maria Wuerth, who spends her summers in Richmond.

FAMILY PHOTO

Dog laws, registry

Virginia dog laws and regulations and the Dangerous Dog Registry can be found at:
www.vdacs.virginia.gov

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Consumer Services, said the registry went online July 1 this year, but the law took effect July 1, 2006, and 48 dogs are now on it.

An estimated 75 to 100 dogs that were declared dangerous before July 1, 2006, and are still alive should be posted

A dog declared "dangerous" is not the same as one that has killed or seriously injured a human or another pet and has been declared "vicious." Dogs declared vicious are put down. Dogs deemed dangerous typically have attacked and injured a person or another pet.

Laura Kicken testified yesterday that on the evening of July 5, she jogged by Carapico's house near Byrd Park and spotted a barking Godiva running down the front steps toward her. Kicken said she tried to run away, but the dog was too fast.

Godiva bit her on the back of the calf and continued running at her and

the victim was a guest of Carapico.

Carapico testified yesterday that she has had Godiva in training since July 2006. She said Godiva had always stayed in her fenced yard but was able to slip out underneath the fence as a thunderstorm approached July 5.

Jemi Hodge, of K-9 Consultants Inc., has been working with Godiva and said that "she's just much more under control." She said Godiva is a herding dog, and such dogs tend to chase animals or people that run from them.

Hodge said that 85 percent of the dogs she works with never bite again. "I think she can be saved," she said of Godiva.