July 2012

Appealability of Class Certification Denials After Roper and Geraghty: The Flexible Character of the Case or Controversy Requirement

Henry John Kupperman

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarship.law.stjohns.edu/lawreview

Recommended Citation

This Note is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at St. John's Law Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in St. John's Law Review by an authorized administrator of St. John's Law Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact cerjanm@stjohns.edu.
NOTE

APPEALABILITY OF CLASS CERTIFICATION DENIALS AFTER ROPER AND GERAGHTY: THE FLEXIBLE CHARACTER OF THE CASE OR CONTROVERSY REQUIREMENT

INTRODUCTION

Under the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, before a class suit may proceed, the trial judge must “certify” the class as such.¹ The


In considering whether to certify a class, the district court must look to see if the particular suit satisfies the requirements of rule 23(a), see notes 23-25 and accompanying text infra, and if the class fits within one of the categories described in rule 23(b). See, e.g., Miller v. Mackey Int’l, Inc., 452 F.2d 424, 427-29 (6th Cir. 1971); Hyatt v. United Aircraft Corp., Sikorsky Aircraft Div., 50 F.R.D. 242, 245-47 (D. Conn. 1970). Although the district court generally is not required to make findings regarding its decision as to certification, it may do so if there are substantive controversies regarding the certification. See Interpace Corp. v. City of Philadelphia, 438 F.2d 401, 404 (3d Cir. 1971). Recognized to be discretionary in nature, see Berman v. New Hampshire Jockey Club, Inc., 292 F. Supp. 993, 999-1000 (D. N.H. 1968), rev’d on other grounds sub nom., Berman v. Narragansett Racing Ass’n, Inc., 414 F.2d 311 (1st Cir. 1969), cert. denied, 396 U.S. 1037 (1970); Baxter v. Savannah Sugar Ref. Corp., 46 F.R.D. 56, 59 (S.D. Ga. 1968); Philadelphia Elec. Co. v. Anaconda Am. Brass Co., 43 F.R.D. 452, 458 (E.D. Pa. 1968), the determination of class certification may be reversed or amended during the course of the litigation, see, e.g., Lamphere v. Brown Univ., 553 F.2d 714, 718-19 (1st Cir. 1977); Guerin v. J & W Inv., Inc., 544 F.2d 863, 864-65 (6th Cir. 1977); Geratly v. Continental Airlines, Inc., 466 F.2d 1374, 1375-78 (10th Cir. 1972);
effect of the certification, the Supreme Court has noted, is to imbue the class with "a legal status separate from the interests" asserted by the named plaintiffs. Where class certification is denied, however, the maintenance of the action as a class suit—frequently the only economically feasible means of seeking redress—depends on the availability of an effective right of appeal. The existence of such right of appeal generally requires the satisfaction of two conditions. The first, imposed by statute, as a general rule mandates that the appeal be taken only from a "final decision." At one time this requirement was liberally construed, thus permitting appeals from certification rulings which had the practical economic effect of terminating the litigation, notwithstanding that such rulings generally were not final in the literal sense. The Supreme Court, however, rejected this attempt to circumvent the finality requirement in Coopers & Lybrand v. Livesay, holding that no interlocutory appeal lies as of right from an adverse certification ruling. The second condition to obtaining appellate review of a certification denial, one of constitutional dimension, is that the party pursuing the appeal must possess a personal stake in the outcome.


28 U.S.C. § 1291 (1976) states in pertinent part: "The courts of appeals shall have jurisdiction of appeals from all final decisions." The Supreme Court has interpreted the statute to mean that finality is a prerequisite to appellate review in the absence of a statutory or common-law exception. See Andrews v. United States, 373 U.S. 334, 340 (1963); Cobbleddick v. United States, 309 U.S 323, 324 (1940). The policy underlying finality is to "avoid the mischief of economic waste and of delayed justice," Radio Station WOW, Inc. v. Johnson, 326 U.S. 120, 124 (1945), as well as "prevent[ing] the debilitating effect on judicial administration caused by piecemeal appeal disposition of what is in practical consequence, but a single controversy." Eisen v. Carlisle & Jacquelin, 417 U.S. 156, 170 (1974). Some commentators, however, have suggested that a more flexible approach to appealability than that provided by the current judicial interpretation of finality is needed. See Redish, The Pragmatic Approach to Appealability in the Federal Courts, 75 COLUM. L. REV. 89 (1975); Note, Proposals for Interlocutory Appeals, 58 YALE L.J. 1186 (1949). For a discussion of some of the more important exceptions to finality, see notes 35-83 and accompanying text infra.

a In Gillespie v. United States Steel Corp., 379 U.S. 148 (1964), the Supreme Court stated that the finality requirement should be given "a practical rather than a technical construction." Id. at 152. Relying on this statement, the Second Circuit, in Eisen v. Carlisle & Jacquelin, 370 F.2d 119 (2d Cir. 1966), held that when the denial of the class suit sounded the "death knell" of the suit, it was in practical terms a final order and was appealable as of right under 28 U.S.C. § 1291. 370 F.2d at 121. See notes 35-51 and accompanying text infra.


a Id. at 477. See notes 52-61 and accompanying text infra.
of the litigation.\(^7\) The effect of this requirement on the continuation of a class action once certified has been the subject of several Supreme Court decisions in recent years.\(^8\) Indeed, the Court has noted that once certified, the interest of the class is sufficient to justify the continuation of the action, notwithstanding that the named plaintiff—the putative class representative—has individually lost the stake in the outcome requisite to satisfy the case or controversy requirement.\(^9\) Moreover, the Court has also suggested that when the named plaintiff's individual claim has become moot before the trial court has ruled on the motion to certify, which motion it subsequently grants, the certification may be found to relate back to the filing of the complaint so as to establish the existence of the case or controversy necessary to continue the action.\(^10\) Until

\(^7\) The personal stake requirement necessary to establish standing derives from article III of the United States Constitution which limits the jurisdiction of the federal courts to "cases" and "controversies." U.S. Const. art. III, § 2. See, e.g., Warth v. Seldin, 422 U.S. 490, 498-502 (1975); North Carolina v. Rice, 404 U.S. 244, 246 (1971); Powell v. McCormack, 395 U.S. 486, 486 n.7 (1969); United States v. Raines, 362 U.S. 17, 20-21 (1960). The case or controversy requirement limits the jurisdiction of the federal courts to suits brought "in an adversary context and in a form capable of judicial resolution." Flast v. Cohen, 392 U.S. 83, 101 (1968). Since the extent of the case or controversy requirement is not readily definable, see Poe v. Ullman, 367 U.S. 497, 509 (Frankfurter, J., concurring), the Supreme Court has had great flexibility in defining the limits of justiciability in each particular case. See L. Tribe, AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW §§ 3-8 (1978). In interpreting such limits, however, the courts are precluded by article III from considering non-adversarial matters, such as advisory opinions. See Alabama State Fed'n of Labor v. McAdory, 325 U.S. 450, 461 (1945). The restriction on advisory opinions is designed to maintain the separation of powers, since advisory functions are duties restricted to the executive and legislative branches. See United States v. Fruehauf, 365 U.S. 146, 147 (1961); Hayburn's Case, 2 U.S. (2 Dall.) 409, 410 n.2 (1792). In meeting the adversarial requirement, the plaintiff must possess a personal stake in the controversy. Flast v. Cohen, 392 U.S. 83, 101 (1968); Baker v. Carr, 369 U.S. 186 (1962). In Baker, the Supreme Court noted that the personal stake requirement was designed "to assure that concrete adverseness which sharpens the presentation of issues upon which the court so largely depends for illumination. . . ." Id. at 204. See, e.g., Sierra Club v. Morton, 405 U.S. 727, 731 (1972). Whether the requisite personal stake exists is a frequently litigated issue in public interest suits. See generally L. JAFFE, JUDICIAL CONTROL OF ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION 459-500 (1963); Berger, Standing to Sue in Public Actions: Is It a Constitutional Requirement?, 78 YALE L.J. 816 (1969).


recently, however, a conflict existed among the circuits on the issue of whether the mootness of the named plaintiff's individual claim subsequent to the denial of certification would preclude him from seeking review of the certification ruling. In the companion cases, Deposit Guaranty National Bank v. Roper and United States Parole Commission v. Geraghty, however, the Supreme Court resolved the controversy holding that at least in certain instances, the mootness in whole or in part of the putative class representative's claim did not deprive him of the personal stake in the outcome of the litigation requisite to appealing the certification ruling.

In light of the recent developments both in the interpretation of finality and the effect of the mootness of the named plaintiff's individual claim, this Note will explore the current availability of an effective right of appeal for would-be class representatives who have been denied class certification in federal court. First, the development of the class action, the requirement of certification, and the right of appeal from certification determinations will be traced. Then, after identifying certain problems that have arisen

infra.

11 The federal courts of appeals have differed as to the viability of the putative class suit when the named plaintiff's individual claim expires prior to certification. Some courts had held that once the named plaintiff's claim was rendered moot, then the putative class suit must be dismissed for lack of a live case or controversy. See Vun Cannon v. Breed, 565 F.2d 1096, 1098-1101 (9th Cir. 1977); Winokur v. Bell Fed. Sav. & Loan Ass'n, 560 F.2d 271, 276-77 (7th Cir. 1977), cert. denied, 435 U.S. 932 (1978); Kuahulu v. Employers Ins. of Wausau, 557 F.2d 1334, 1336-37 (9th Cir. 1976) (per curiam); Boyd v. Justices of Special Term, 546 F.2d 526, 527 (2d Cir. 1976); Napier v. Gertrude, 542 F.2d 825, 826-28 (10th Cir. 1976), cert. denied, 429 U.S. 1049 (1977). Other courts, however, have allowed class suits to continue notwithstanding the mootness of the plaintiff's claim. See Susman v. Lincoln American Corp., 587 F.2d 866, 868-71 (7th Cir. 1978), cert. denied, 445 U.S. 940 (1980); Roper v. Consurve, 578 F.2d 1106 (5th Cir. 1978), aff'd sub nom. Deposit Guar. Nat'l Bank v. Roper, 445 U.S. 326 (1980); cf. Armour v. City of Anniston, 597 F.2d 46, 48-49 (5th Cir. 1979), vacated, 445 U.S. 940 (1980); Camper v. Calumet Petrochemicals, Inc., 584 F.2d 70, 71-72 (5th Cir. 1978) (per curiam) (where named plaintiff's claim found meritless, class suit dismissed unless plaintiff has "nexus" with putative class). But cf. Goodman v. Schlesinger, 584 F.2d 1325 (4th Cir. 1978) (dismissal of named plaintiff's claim on the merits held not to require dismissal of class claim until after reasonable time for intervention by proper plaintiff has passed).


15 See notes 19-34 and accompanying text infra.
regarding the appealability of a denial of class certification, an analysis will be made of recent cases which have relaxed the article III case or controversy requirements thereby facilitating the appeal of some certification rulings. Finally, this Note will suggest that although these most recent decisions have ameliorated some of the problems involved in appealing certification rulings, they nevertheless have not secured for the aggrieved putative class representative a meaningful right of appeal from adverse certification determinations.

**DEVELOPMENT OF THE CLASS ACTION AND THE CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE**

The class suit device, which originated in order to circumvent the stringency of common-law joinder requirements, allows suit to be brought by a representative who asserts not only his own claim, but also the rights of the class as a whole. Thus, the class suit makes possible the avoidance of much of the cost, effort, and time that would have been required to litigate each claim individually. Although the class action first was promulgated by the courts of equity, representative suit today generally is authorized

---

16 See notes 35-92 and accompanying text infra.
17 See notes 93-136 and accompanying text infra.
18 See notes 137-150 and accompanying text infra.
20 The class representative is, in effect, a "private attorney general," litigating on behalf of an aggrieved class. See Associated Indus. v. Ickes, 134 F.2d 694, 700-05 (2d Cir. 1943). As such, the class suit has been called "a cross between administrative action and private litigation." Dolgov v. Anderson, 43 F.R.D. 472, 481 (E.D.N.Y. 1968); see Homburger, Private Suits in the Public Interest in the United States of America, 23 BUFFALO L. REV. 375-79 (1974); Kalven & Rosenfield, The Contemporary Function of the Class Suit, 8 U. CHI. L. REV. 684, 717 (1941).
22 See System Fed'n. No. 91 v. Reed, 180 F.2d 991, 995 (6th Cir. 1950). The class action originated in the English Court of Chancery, where the bill of peace was used to permit suit by an individual on behalf of an entire group. See Z. CHAFFEE, CASES ON EQUITABLE REMEDIES 200-13 (1938); W. WALSH, EQUITY § 118, at 553-60 (1930); 7 C. WRIGHT & A. MILLER, supra note 21, § 1751 at 504. See generally Langdell, A Brief Survey of Equity Jurisdiction (VII): Creditor's Bills, 5 HARV. L. REV. 101, 109, 128 (1891).
by statute. For federal cases, rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure is controlling. Originally adopted in 1938 and sub-

Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure states in pertinent part:

(a) Prerequisites to a Class Action. One or more members of a class may sue or be sued as representative parties on behalf of all only if (1) the class is so numerous that joinder of all members is impracticable, (2) there are questions of law or fact common to the class, (3) the claims or defenses of the representative parties are typical of the claims or defenses of the class, and (4) the representative parties will fairly and adequately protect the interests of the class.

(b) Class Actions Maintainable. An action may be maintained as a class action if the prerequisites of subdivision (a) are satisfied, and in addition:

(1) the prosecution of separate actions by or against individual members of the class would create a risk of

(A) inconsistent or varying adjudications with respect to individual members of the class which would establish incompatible standards of conduct for the party opposing the class, or

(B) adjudications with respect to individual members of the class which would as a practical matter be dispositive of the interests of the other members not parties to the adjudications or substantially impair or impede their ability to protect their interests; or

(2) the party opposing the class has acted or refused to act on grounds generally applicable to the class, thereby making appropriate final injunctive relief or corresponding declaratory relief with respect to the class as a whole; or

(3) the court finds that the questions of law or fact common to the members of the class predominate over any questions affecting only individual members, and that a class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy. The matters pertinent to the findings include: (A) the interest of members of the class in individually controlling the prosecution or defense of separate actions; (B) the extent and nature of any litigation concerning the controversy already commenced by or against members of the class; (C) the desirability or undesirability of concentrating the litigation of the claims in the particular forum; (D) the difficulties likely to be encountered in the management of a class action.

(c) Determination by Order Whether Class Action to be Maintained; Notice; Judgment; Actions Conducted Partially as Class Actions.

(1) As soon as practicable after the commencement of an action brought as a class action, the court shall determine by order whether it is to be so maintained. An order under this subdivision may be conditional, and may be altered or amended before the decision on the merits.

(2) In any class action maintained under subdivision (b)(3), the court shall direct to the members of the class the best notice practicable under the circumstances, including individual notice to all members who can be identified through reasonable effort. The notice shall advise each member that (A) the court will exclude him from the class if he so requests by a specific date; (B) the judgment, whether favorable or not, will include all members who do not request exclusion; and (C) any member who does not request exclusion may, if he desires, enter an appearance through his counsel.

(3) The judgment in an action maintained as a class action under subdivision (b)(1) or (b)(2), whether or not favorable to the class, shall include and describe those whom the court finds to be members of the class. The judgment in an action maintained as a class action under subdivision (b)(3), whether or not favorable to
the class, shall include and specify or describe those to whom the notice provided in subdivision (c)(2) was directed, and who have not requested exclusion, and whom the court finds to be members of the class.

(4) When appropriate (A) an action may be brought or maintained as a class action with respect to particular issues, or (B) a class may be divided into subclasses and each subclass treated as a class, and the provisions of this rule shall then be construed and applied accordingly.

FED. R. CIV. P. 23(a), (b), (c). This rule, which allows wide discretion to the trial judges in permitting class suits, was intended to promote availability of class actions. See Amendments to Rules of Civil Procedure, 39 F.R.D. 69, 100, 102, 104 (1966). Thus, rule 23 is to be given a liberal, rather than restrictive interpretation. Eisen v. Carlisle & Jacquelin, 391 F.2d 555, 563 (2d Cir. 1968); Escott v. Barchris Construction Corp., 340 F.2d 731, 733 (2d Cir. 1965), cert. denied, 382 U.S. 816 (1966); accord, Alameda Oil Co. v. Ideal Basic Indus., Inc., 326 F. Supp. 98, 102 (D. Colo. 1971).

As originally enacted, rule 23 came under scholarly attack. See Kalven & Rosenfield, The Contemporary Function of the Class Suit, supra note 20, at 684 (1941); Simeone, Procedural Problems of Class Suits, 60 MICH. L. REV. 905 (1962). But see Van Der Creek, The "Is" and "Ought" of Class Actions Under Federal Rule 23, 48 IOWA L. REV. 273 (1963). One source of criticism was the failure of the rule to address the binding effect of a class action judgment on the absent members. See Moore & Cohn, Federal Class Actions—Jurisdiction and Effect of Judgment, 32 ILL. L. REV. 555, 556 (1958) (advisory committee on the federal rules believed that matter of binding effect was substantive and, hence, not a proper subject for treatment in procedural rules). At the root of this criticism was the adoption by the 1938 rule of a tripartite classification. Under this classification, rule 23 required that all class actions be categorized into one of three categories. See 7 C. WRIGHT & A. MILLER, supra note 21, § 1752. These classifications came to be known as the "true," "hybrid," and "spurious" class suits. Id. Proper categorization was very important to the class action litigant since many courts came to determine the question of the binding effect of the class judgment on the basis of which category of class suit was involved. See F. JAMES & G. HAZARD, supra note 19, at 503; see Note, Collateral Attack on the Binding Effect of Class Action Judgments, supra note 21, at 591-92. Another criticism of the 1938 rule was its failure to provide adequate assurance of procedural fairness. See Note, Developments in the Law—Multiparty Litigation in the Federal Courts, 71 HARV. L. REV. 874, 937-38 (1958); Note, Federal Class Actions: A Suggested Revision of Rule 23, 46 COLUM. L. REV. 818, 822-33 (1946).

In amending rule 23 in 1966, the Supreme Court attempted to remedy difficulties that existed with the 1938 rule, see note 24 supra, by taking a more practical approach in outlining the requirements for a class action. See Wright, Recent Changes in the Federal Rules of Procedure, 42 F.R.D. 552, 663-67 (1966); Note, Revised Federal Rule 23, Class Actions: Surviving Difficulties and New Problems Require Further Amendments, 52 MINN. L. REV. 509, 509-10 (1967). But see Miller, Problems of Giving Notice in Class Actions, 58 F.R.D. 313, 334 (1973) (notice requirement is best left to discretion of the district court). In addition to abolishing the tripartite categorization of the 1938 rule, see note 24 supra, the 1966 amendments added sections (c)(2) and (d) to rule 23. Rule 23(c)(2) requires that in an action for damages, once the class is certified, notice be sent to all potential class members and if the members do not want to be considered part of the class, then they can ask to be excluded from the class. FED. R. CIV. P. 23(c)(2). Rule 23(d) provides the district court with flexibility to conduct the class suit by permitting the court to "make appropriate orders." FED. R. CIV. P. 23(d). This section was added to encourage the judiciary to take a more active role to ensure that the absent class was properly represented. See generally Newberg,
maintenance of a class suit and the procedure to be used by the trial court to determine whether the purported class will be certified. Before the trial court will certify the class, the plaintiff must demonstrate that all of the requirements of rule 23 are met. Thus, in carrying this burden of proof, the would-be class representative must show among other things that joinder of all members of the class is impracticable because of the class size, that the case presents questions of law or fact which are common to the class, and that he will adequately and fairly represent the absent class members. Once the class is certified, the separate legal status which it acquires triggers significant procedural consequences.

Significantly, denial by the trial court of certification means only that the plaintiff may not bring suit as a representative; he may continue, of course, with his individual cause of action. Nevertheless, it has been recognized that the decision whether a claim may proceed as a class action may also be determinative of the


Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(a), (b).

Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(c)(1). See 7A C. Wright & A. Miller, supra note 21, at § 1785. In a suit for damages, the determination of class certification should be made prior to adjudication of the merits, Peritz v. Liberty Loan Corp., 523 F.2d 349, 353-54 (7th Cir. 1975), but this determination may be made subsequent to adjudication of the merits upon waiver by the class opponent, Katz v. Carte Blanche Corp., 496 F.2d 747, 762 (3d Cir.) (en banc), cert. denied, 419 U.S. 885 (1974). In class suits for injunctive or declaratory relief, the class determination may be made subject to the court's decision on the merits. See Roberts v. American Airlines, Inc., 526 F.2d 757 (7th Cir. 1975), cert. denied, 425 U.S. 951 (1976).

Strict compliance with the requirements of rule 23 is required in order to maintain a class suit. The failure to satisfy even one of the requisites is grounds for dismissal. See, e.g., Doctor v. Seaboard Coast Line R.R., 540 F.2d 699, 708-09 (4th Cir. 1976); Burns v. United States Postal Serv., 380 F. Supp. 623, 629-30 (S.D.N.Y. 1974); Bennett v. United States, 266 F. Supp. 627, 629 (W.D. Okla. 1965).


The date of certification marks the time when all class members must be given notice of the institution of the suit, and invests an unnamed class member with the right to “enter an appearance through his counsel,” and to “opt out” of the class suit. Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(c)(2). In addition, once the class is certified, any class judgment, whether or not favorable, will be binding upon all the members of the class. See In re Four Seasons Sec. Laws Litigation, 525 F.2d 500, 502-04 (10th Cir. 1975); Berry Petroleum Co. v. Adams & Peck, 518 F.2d 402, 411-13 (2d Cir. 1975); Brown v. Housing Auth., 471 F.2d 63, 69 (7th Cir. 1972); Bowe v. Colgate-Palmolive Co., 416 F.2d 711, 720 (7th Cir. 1969); Amendments to Rules of Civil Procedure, 39 F.R.D. 69, 99 (1966).
ultimate substantive outcome of the case. For example, in some instances denial of class certification, in effect, may terminate the plaintiff's claim because it is impracticable for him to proceed individually. In addition, litigation strategy and settlement possibilities may depend on the certification determination. Thus, an effective right of appeal from adverse class certification decisions is of significant consequence to an aggrieved class-action plaintiff.

**Appealability of Class Action Certification Determinations**

**The Rise and Fall of the Death Knell Doctrine**

Section 1291 of Title 28 of the United States Code limits to "final decisions" the district court determinations from which an appeal may be taken as of right, in the absence of a specific statutory grant to the contrary. The primary purpose of the restrict-
tion is to prevent the waste associated with fragmented appellate review by disallowing appeal of any determination that is “tentative, informal or incomplete.” 37 Although the concept of finality defies precise definition, 38 generally a final order may be categorized as one which “fully and finally” determines the action. 39 Since an order denying class certification is procedural in nature 40 and does not determine the merits of the controversy, 41 it is con-

37 Fleischer v. Phillips, 264 F.2d 515, 517 (2d Cir.), cert. denied, 359 U.S. 1002 (1959). See United States v. Nixon, 418 U.S. 683, 690 (1974); Eisen v. Carlisle & Jacquelin, 417 U.S. 156, 170-72 (1974); Markham v. Holt, 369 F.2d 940, 942 (5th Cir. 1966); Paliaga v. Luckenbach S.S. Co., 301 F.2d 403, 406-07 (2d Cir. 1962). Additional justification for the rule can be found, however, in a desire to avoid judicial backlog in the federal appellate courts, see Frank, Requiem for the Final Judgment Rule, 45 TEX. L. REV. 292, 293 (1966), in the prevention of the delay that might be caused by allowing nonfinal orders to be appealed, see Note, A Final Tolling of the Death-Knell: The Doctrine, Its Denise and Current Alternative Methods of Appeal of Class Certification Orders, 28 DRAKE L. REV. 668, 671 & n.21 (1979), and the avoidance of unnecessary tension between the district courts and the courts of appeals, see id. at 671 & n.22 (citing Parkinson v. April Indus., Inc., 520 F.2d 650, 654 (2d Cir. 1975)).

38 As the Supreme Court has stated, “No verbal formula yet devised can explain prior finality decisions with unerring accuracy or provide an utterly reliable guide for the future.” Eisen v. Carlisle & Jacquelin, 417 U.S. 156, 170 (1974). See Dickinson v. Petroleum Conversion Corp., 338 U.S. 507 (1950); McGourkey v. Toledo & O. Cent. Ry., 146 U.S. 536 (1892). Professor Wright points out, however, that “[t]he saving grace of the imprecise rule of finality is that in almost all situations it is entirely clear, either from the nature of the order or from a crystallized body of decisions, that a particular order is or is not final.” C. WRIGHT, FEDERAL COURTS § 101, at 305. See Note, Appealability in the Federal Courts, 75 HARV. L. REV. 351, 354 (1961). See also Will v. United States, 389 U.S. 90, 108 (1967) (Black, J., concurring); Redish, supra note 3, at 90. See also Freeman v. Califano, 574 F.2d 264, 266-67 (5th Cir. 1978); United States v. 243.22 Acres of Land, 129 F.2d 678, 680 (2d Cir. 1942), cert. denied, 317 U.S. 698 (1943).


41 See Eisen v. Carlisle & Jacquelin, 417 U.S. 156, 177-78 (1974); Miller v. Mackey Int'l,
cededly nonfinal\textsuperscript{42} and seemingly subject to the general proscription of interlocutory appeals.\textsuperscript{43} Nevertheless, not long after the revision of federal class action procedures in 1966, an exception to the final-judgment rule of section 1291, the death knell doctrine, was fashioned by the judiciary in an attempt to balance the competing interests underlying the general federal prohibition against interlocutory appeals and the policies which gave rise to the establishment of class actions. The doctrine was promulgated in the seminal case of Eisen v. Carlisle & Jacquelin,\textsuperscript{44} wherein the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit was presented with the question of whether a party could appeal as of right a district court order which dismissed his class action, but allowed him to proceed with his individual claim.\textsuperscript{45} Weighing the conflicting interests of “the in-

\textsuperscript{42} Coopers & Lybrand v. Livesay, 437 U.S. 463, 471 (1978); accord, Williams v. City of New Orleans, 565 F.2d 874, 874-75 (5th Cir. 1978) (per curiam); West v. Capitol Fed. Sav. & Loan Ass'n, 558 F.2d 977, 981 (10th Cir. 1977); Schlick v. Penn-Dixie Cement Corp., 551 F.2d 531, 532-33 (2d Cir. 1977); Domaco Venture Capital Fund v. Teltronics Servs., Inc., 551 F.2d 508, 509 (2d Cir. 1977) (per curiam); Green v. Occidental Petroleum Corp., 541 F.2d 1335, 1338 (9th Cir. 1976) (per curiam); King v. Kansas City S. Indus., Inc., 479 F.2d 1259 (7th Cir. 1973); Hackett v. General Host Corp., 455 F.2d 618, 621 (3d Cir.), cert. denied, 407 U.S. 925 (1972); Walsh v. City of Detroit, 412 F.2d 226 (6th Cir. 1969).

\textsuperscript{43} Catlin v. United States, 324 U.S. 229, 233 (1945); see Kappelmann v. Delta Air Lines, Inc., 539 F.2d 165, 167-68 (D.C. Cir. 1976), cert. denied, 429 U.S. 1061 (1977). The federal courts have held that a class certification determination generally is not a decision on the merits and that even if class certification is denied, the named plaintiff may still proceed with the litigation of his individual claim. See Lamphere v. Brown Univ., 553 F.2d 714, 718 (1st Cir. 1977); General Motors Corp. v. City of New York, 501 F.2d 639, 645 (2d Cir. 1974); Siebert v. Northern Dev. Co., 494 F.2d 510, 511 (5th Cir. 1974).

\textsuperscript{44} 370 F.2d 119 (2d Cir. 1966), cert. denied, 386 U.S. 1035 (1967).

\textsuperscript{45} 370 F.2d at 119. The named plaintiff in Eisen brought an action in federal district court alleging that the defendants, “odd lots” dealers on the New York Stock Exchange, had violated the Sherman Act. Id. at 119-20. Eisen, whose individual claim was for seventy dollars, sought to bring the suit on behalf of a class of similarly situated “odd-lot purchasers and sellers on the Exchange.” Id. at 120. On motion by the defendants, the district court denied class certification and dismissed the class suit on the grounds that the named plaintiff could not fairly and adequately represent the class and that common class issues were absent. Eisen v. Carlisle & Jacquelin, 41 F.R.D. 147, 150-52 (S.D.N.Y. 1966), rev'd on other grounds, 391 F.2d 555 (2d Cir. 1968). Eisen, however, was permitted to continue with his individual claim. 370 F.2d at 120.

The Second Circuit acknowledged that in general only final orders may be appealed, id.; see 28 U.S.C. § 1291; notes 3, 36 and accompanying text supra, but noted that there were exceptions and limitations to this rule. 370 F.2d at 120. In this regard, the court cited 28 U.S.C. § 1292 (1976), wherein the legislature had enumerated several types of nonfinal orders from which appeal may be had. 370 F.2d at 120. The court also observed that the
convenience and costs of piecemeal review on the one hand and the
danger of denying justice by delay on the other,” the Second Cir-
cuit ruled that, on the facts presented, the balance tipped in favor
of granting immediate appeal, since a denial of immediate review
would “for all practical purposes terminate the litigation.” Thus,
the court held: “where the effect of a district court’s order, if not
reviewed, is the death knell of the action, review should be
allowed.”

The exception to the general rule against interlocutory appeal
promulgated in Eisen, commonly called the “death knell” doc-
trine, found acceptance among a number of circuits. Since it al-
lowed immediate appeal of orders denying class certification, the
doctrine was a very attractive tool to aggrieved plaintiffs and not

concept of finality under section 1291 had been distinguished from “the last order possible
to be made,” thus allowing appeals from class certification denials where there seemed to be
little chance of the suit continuing. 370 F.2d at 120 (quoting Gillespie v. United States Steel
Corp., 379 U.S. 148, 152 (1964)).

370 F.2d at 120. In reaching its decision, the Second Circuit purported to apply the
“collateral order” doctrine. Id.; see notes 74-77 and accompanying text infra. It appears,
however, that in construing the requirement of finality practically rather than technically,
the court went beyond the scope of that doctrine.

370 F.2d at 121.

See Note, A Final Tolling of the Death Knell: The Doctrine, Its Demise and Cur-
rent Alternative Methods of Appeal of Class Certification Orders, 28 Drake L. Rev. 668,
670, 674-680 (1979); Note, Civil Procedure—Appealability of Interlocutory Orders Denying
Class Certification—The Supreme Court Sounds the Death Knell for the Death Knell Doc-
trine, the Collateral Order Doctrine, and Appeals Based on 28 U.S.C. § 1292(a)(1), 27 U.
Kan. L. Rev. 529, 532-33 (1979); Case Comment, Immediate Appealability of Orders Deny-
ing Class Certification: Coopers & Lybrand v. Livesay and Gardner v. Westinghouse Broad-

See Livesay v. Punta Gorda Isles, Inc., 560 F.2d 1106, 1112 (8th Cir. 1977), rev’d sub nom.
F.2d 279, 281-83 (9th Cir.), cert. denied, 429 U.S. 923 (1976); Ott v. Speedwriting Publishing
Co., 518 F.2d 1143, 1146-48 (6th Cir. 1975); Hartmann v. Scott, 488 F.2d 1215, 1223 (8th Cir.
1973); Gosa v. Securities Inv. Co., 449 F.2d 1330, 1332 (5th Cir. 1971); Korn v. Franchard
Corp., 443 F.2d 1301, 1304-06 (2d Cir. 1971). Not all circuits embraced the death knell con-
cept, however. Several courts of appeals held that the class certification determination was
reviewable only after final judgment. See Williams v. Mumford, 511 F.2d 363, 369-71 (D.C.
Cir.), cert. denied, 423 U.S. 828 (1975); King v. Kansas City S. Indus., Inc., 479 F.2d 1259,
1260 (7th Cir. 1973); Hackett v. General Host Corp., 455 F.2d 618, 621 (3d Cir.), cert. de-

Interestingly, at a later stage of the Eisen litigation, the Supreme Court reviewed the
history of the case without comment, causing some to believe that it ultimately would en-
dorse the death knell doctrine. See Eisen v. Carlisle & Jacquelin, 417 U.S. 156, 161-69
(1974); Note, A Final Tolling of the Death-Knell: The Doctrine, Its Demise and Current
Alternative Methods of Appeal of Class Certification Orders, 28 Drake L. Rev. 668, 674-75
surprisingly was frequently employed in class-action litigation. The decisions in which it was applied evinced judicial awareness of the significance and necessity of a meaningful right of appeal from an order denying certification of the class. The doctrine, however, was not long lived. In 1978, the Supreme Court in Coopers & Lybrand v. Livesay sounded the death knell of the death knell doctrine.

In Livesay, suit was brought alleging a violation of the federal securities laws. The named plaintiffs, who claimed that they had purchased securities in reliance on a defective prospectus, sought to represent a class of purchasers of the securities. The district court at first certified, but later decertified the class. On the plaintiff's appeal of this decision, the Eighth Circuit, applying the death knell doctrine, held that it had jurisdiction to hear the appeal. The United States Supreme Court, however, unanimously reversed the court of appeals decision, expressly rejecting the death knell doctrine.

Delivering the opinion of the Court, Justice Stevens expressed disapproval of a judicially engrafted exception to the finality requirement under which "appealability turns on the court's percep-

---

63 437 U.S. at 465-66.
64 Id. at 465. The plaintiffs claimed that they had incurred a loss of $2,650 on their investment in the securities of Punta Gorda Isles, Inc. Coopers & Lybrand was the accounting firm that had certified the financial statements in the allegedly defective prospectus and thus, was named as a defendant. Id.
65 Id. at 466.
66 The plaintiffs did not continue to a final judgment on their individual claim. Nor did they seek a discretionary appeal pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1292(b) (1976). Rather, they sought to appeal immediately as of right. 437 U.S. at 466.
67 550 F.2d 1106, 1112 (8th Cir. 1977).
68 437 U.S. at 476-77. Prior to reaching the death knell issue, the Court initially determined that a class certification ruling was nonfinal since it did not constitute "a decision by the District Court that 'ends the litigation on the merits and leaves nothing for the court to do but execute the judgment.'" Id. at 467 (quoting Catlin v. United States, 324 U.S. 229, 233 (1945)). Moreover, at the outset, the Court found that an order granting or denying class certification did not fall within the collateral order doctrine. Id. at 468-69; see notes 74-77 and accompanying text infra.
tion of th[e] impact [of a certification decision] in the individual case."50 It is not proper, the Court reasoned, for the judiciary to be required to base appealability on its perception of whether a "plaintiff has adequate incentive to continue" with his individual claim.51 Additionally, the Court found that it could not approve of the death knell doctrine, since it "authorize[d] indiscriminate interlocutory review of decisions made by the trial judge," and thus, would defeat the statutorily established scheme allowing a limited right of appeal from interlocutory orders.61

Remaining Methods of Interlocutory Appeal

Both the reasoning and the result of the Livesay decision have been strongly criticized.62 It has been suggested, for example, that the decision effectively leaves remediless the wide range of plaintiffs for whom the denial of class certification is, for all practical purposes, final judgment.63 Indeed, although there remain several methods of interlocutory appeal other than the death knell doctrine, each of these alternatives has failed to provide adequate assurance of a meaningful right of appeal for aggrieved class-action

50 437 U.S. at 470-71. The Court, although admitting that the class action is to some extent a "special kind of litigation," found that the absence of special provisions regarding appealability in the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure indicated that "[t]he appealability of any order entered in a class action is determined by the same standards that govern appealability in other types of litigation." Id. at 470.

51 Id. at 471. In the course of rejecting the death knell rule on the grounds that it required the trial judge to subjectively assess the prospects of the plaintiff continuing the action in his individual capacity, the Court stated that it is the function of the legislature and not the judiciary to permit appeal based on the size of the named plaintiff's claim. Id. at 472. In noting that finality is the prerequisite to appealability, the Court held that basing finality on the plaintiff's monetary claim, absent legislative enactment, is "arbitrary," for such a consideration does not examine the other factors influencing the named plaintiff to proceed on his own behalf. Id. The Court listed factors such as the plaintiff's "subjective willingness" to continue suit, the intervention of other parties, and the possibility of reversal of the certification denial upon appeal after final judgment. Id. at 470-71 n.15.

52 Id. at 474 (emphasis in original). In particular, the Court posited that to permit interlocutory appeal as of right would be to circumvent the restrictions of 28 U.S.C. § 1292(b) (1976), which authorizes discretionary appeal from nonfinal orders only in exceptional circumstances. 437 U.S. at 474-75. The Court termed this possibility of circumventing the procedures of section 1292(b) "[p]erhaps the principal vice of the 'death knell' doctrine." Id. at 474.


54 See Cohen, supra note 62, at 267-73; Case Comment, supra note 49, at 464-73.
plaintiffs.

1. Statutory Appeal As of Right From Certain Nonfinal Orders

Section 1292(a) of Title 28 of the United States Code enumerates specific interlocutory orders from which appeal may be had as of right. This statutory list of exceptions to the rule of finality is based on the policy of granting an aggrieved party a right of appeal where such a right is necessary to challenge effectively the order and where the order is of serious, and perhaps irreparable consequence. Class action certification determinations, however, are not among the particularized orders named in section 1292(a).

2. Discretionary Appeal

Section 1292(b) provides for the discretionary appeal of interlocutory orders. Before appeal is permitted under this section,
however, both the district court and the appellate court must agree that review is warranted. The statute requires initially that the district court judge certify that the case "involves a controlling question of law" and that "immediate appeal from the order may materially advance the ultimate termination of the litigation." Only then, upon proper application by the aggrieved party, may the court of appeals in its discretion permit the appeal.

When a district judge, in making in a civil action an order not otherwise appealable under this section, shall be of the opinion that such order involves a controlling question of law as to which there is substantial ground for difference of opinion and that an immediate appeal from the order may materially advance the ultimate termination of the litigation, he shall so state in writing in such order. The Court of Appeals may thereupon, in its discretion, permit an appeal to be taken from such order, if application is made to it within ten days after the entry of the order: Provided, however, that application for an appeal hereunder shall not stay proceedings in the district court unless the district judge or the Court of Appeals or a judge thereof shall so order.


Though the district court may certify an order for interlocutory appeal, the appellate court is not bound to certify the appeal. See Katz v. Carte Blanche, 496 F.2d 747, 754 (3d Cir.), cert. denied, 419 U.S 885 (1974); Johnson v. Aldredge, 488 F.2d 820, 822-23 (3d Cir. 1973), cert. denied, 419 U.S. 882 (1974); Gialde v. Time, Inc., 480 F.2d 1295, 1300 (8th Cir. 1973).


appeal of certification denials

at first blush section 1292(b) appears to offer promise to a class action plaintiff who has been denied certification by the trial court, the policies underlying the statute and the prerequisites to appellate review contained therein render it largely ineffective in such context. Indeed, courts generally have been reluctant to construe a class certification determination as involving a controlling question of law or to find that immediate review of such determination would hasten the conclusion of the litigation. 3

3. Collateral Order Doctrine

The collateral order doctrine is a judicially promulgated device by which a party may have an immediate right of appeal from cer-


72 Since a certification ruling made within the rule 23 guidelines is deemed discretionary and procedural, utilization of section 1292(b) as a basis for interlocutory appeal of certification denials cannot be consistently relied upon. See Link v. Mercedes-Benz of North America, Inc., 550 F.2d 860, 862-63 (3d Cir.), cert. denied, 431 U.S. 933 (1977); Arth Main Street Drugs v. Beer Distributors of Indiana, Inc., 26 Fed. R. Serv. 2d 91, 92 (N.D. Ind. 1978). But see Deposit Guaranty Nat'l Bank v. Roper, 445 U.S. 326, 336 n.8 (1980) ("In some cases [§ 1292(b)] appeal would promise substantial savings of time and resources or for other reasons should be viewed hospitably."); Katz v. Carte Blanche Corp., 496 F.2d 747, 755-56 (3d Cir.) (en banc), cert. denied, 419 U.S. 885 (1974) (section 1292(b) should be liberally construed and in some cases may be applicable to review of class certification denials).

tain district court orders that are not final in the traditional sense, yet are sufficiently final to satisfy the congressional intent of section 1291. In order to be appealable under this exception to the rule of finality, the order in question "must conclusively determine the disputed question, resolve an important issue completely separate from the merits of the action, and be effectively unreviewable on appeal from a final judgment." In the case that first recognized the doctrine, for example, immediate appeal was allowed from a district court order denying application of a state statute requiring a deposit of security for costs in a federal diversity suit on the grounds that such determination, distinct from the merits of the controversy, would escape effective review if appeal was forestalled pending final judgment. Although no doubt it can be argued by analogy that an adverse certification decision, because it frequently results in the termination of the litigation, may escape review if a right to immediate appeal is not recognized, it is settled that in such context the collateral order doctrine may not be employed to circumvent the statutory prohibition of interlocutory appeals. Indeed, the Supreme Court in Livesay, in addition to rejecting the death knell doctrine, itself an outgrowth of the collateral order doctrine, made it clear that an order denying class certification is not an order separable from and collateral to

__


76 In Cohen v. Beneficial Indus. Loan Corp., 337 U.S. at 546, the wellspring of the collateral order doctrine, a shareholder derivative suit based on diversity jurisdiction was brought alleging a conspiracy of "mismanagement and fraud" by officers of the corporation. Id. at 543-44. The suit was brought in New Jersey, where a state statute was in force requiring the plaintiff in a shareholder derivative suit to post a $125,000 bond and be liable for the defendant's litigation costs, if the plaintiff lost. Id. at 544-45. After the district court held that the statute was inapplicable to federal actions, the defendant sought interlocutory review. 7 F.R.D. 352, 356 (D.N.J. 1947). The Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, after initially finding the order immediately appealable, 170 F.2d 44, 49-50 (3d Cir. 1948), reversed on the merits, id. at 58. The Supreme Court granted certiorari and as a preliminary matter to its review of the merits, determined that the order was "a final disposition of a claimed right which is not an ingredient of the cause of action and does not require consideration with it." Id. at 546-47. Thus, noting that the statute should be given a "practical rather than a technical construction," the Court held that such an order was immediately reviewable under 28 U.S.C. § 1291. Id. See generally Cobbledick v. United States, 309 U.S. 323, 328 (1940); United States v. River Rouge Improvement Co., 269 U.S. 411, 414 (1926).

78 The collateral order doctrine provided the impetus for the federal courts to recognize the interlocutory appealability of certain class action orders which conceivably could jeopardize the adjudication of the suit if immediate appealability were denied. See Eisen v. Carlisle & Jacquelin, 370 F.2d 119, 120 (2d Cir. 1966), cert. denied, 386 U.S. 1035 (1967); notes 44-48 and accompanying text supra.
rights asserted in the action within the meaning of this exception.  

4. Mandamus

Section 1651(a) of Title 28 permits a federal court to issue "all 
writes necessary or appropriate in aid of [its] jurisdiction and agree-
able to the usages and principles of law." Under this statute it is 
possible for a court of appeals to issue a writ of mandamus di-
recting the trial court to change its ruling. Petition for the writ 
may be made despite any allegation of the nonfinality of the 
order.

The probability of obtaining a writ of mandamus to overturn 
an adverse certification ruling, however, appears slight. Since the 
writ is intended to be used only in exceptional circumstances, it
has been held that the writ should be granted only "when there is a usurpation of judicial power or a clear abuse of discretion." Since such a showing rarely is possible in the class action context, the writ of mandamus appears to be yet another ineffective method by which a class-action plaintiff may seek to obtain an immediate appeal from an order denying class certification.

**THE PROBLEM OF FINAL JUDGMENT APPEAL**

In its opinion in *Livesay*, the Supreme Court seemed unconcerned that the result of its decision would be to preclude an aggrieved party from obtaining immediate appeal of class certification determinations. Rather, the Court expressed confidence that such determinations would obtain "effective review after final judgment." In a line of cases following the *Livesay* case, however, it became increasingly apparent that appeal after final judgment frequently did not provide "effective review" of the lower court order. In particular, the would-be class representative would not be allowed to serve as representative of the class where his individual cause of action became moot subsequent to the denial of class certification. This mootness generally occurred in one of three ways. First, after a denial of class certification by the district court and adjudication of the named plaintiff's individual claim, it became

*Ex parte Fahey*, 332 U.S. 258, 260 (1947). Though some courts have felt that the writ should be liberally applied, see *Parkinson v. April Indus.* Inc., 550 F.2d 650, 655 n.5 (2d Cir. 1975); *Hackett v. General Host Corp.*, 455 F.2d 618, 624 (3d Cir.), *certain denied*, 407 U.S. 925 (1972), there has not been a consistent trend with respect to this matter by the courts. *Compare In re Attorney General of United States*, 596 F.2d 58, 62-65 (2d Cir. 1979); *Citibank, N.A. v. Fullam*, 580 F.2d 82, 86-87 (3d Cir. 1978); *Prop-Jets, Inc. v. Chandler*, 575 F.2d 1322, 1324 (10th Cir. 1978); *Banc Ohio Corp. v. Fox*, 516 F.2d 29, 32-33 (6th Cir. 1975) *with Whitlock's Estate v. Commissioner of Internal Revenue*, 547 F.2d 506, 510 (10th Cir. 1976), *certain denied*, 430 U.S. 916 (1977); *Drew v. Lawrimore*, 380 F.2d 479, 483 (4th Cir. 1967); *Schillinger v. United States Dep't of Justice*, 259 F. Supp. 29, 29 (M.D. Pa. 1966).


*See Bauman v. United States District Court*, 557 F.2d 650, 653-62 (9th Cir. 1977); *Sperry Rand Corp. v. Larson*, 554 F.2d 868, 873-75 (8th Cir. 1977); *Arthur Young & Co. v. United States District Court*, 549 F.2d 686, 697-98 (9th Cir.), *certain denied*, 434 U.S. 829 (1977).

*437 U.S. at 469.

*See notes 91-92 and accompanying text infra.*

apparent that the putative class representative's cause of action was without merit. Alternatively, a named plaintiff's individual claim could be mooted because of a judgment in his favor. Finally, the named plaintiff's claim could become moot due to some occurrence distinct from the adjudicatory process.

The problem posed by the mootness of the named plaintiff's claim prior to appeal of the certification denial has not been uniformly handled by the federal judiciary. In some instances, courts have found that the plaintiff could proceed with his appeal from a district court denial of class certification notwithstanding the intervening mootness of his individual claim. The majority of courts, however, have found that such mootness prevents the putative class-action plaintiff from appealing an adverse certification determination, either for lack of an article III case or controversy.

---


90 See, e.g., Jones v. Diamond, 519 F.2d 1090, 1097-98 (5th Cir. 1975); Conover v. Montemuro, 477 F.2d 1073, 1081-82 (3d Cir. 1973); Rivera v. Freeman, 469 F.2d 1159, 1163 (9th Cir. 1972); Frost v. Weinerberger, 375 F. Supp. 1312, 1318-19 (E.D.N.Y. 1974), rev'd on other grounds, 515 F.2d 57 (2d Cir. 1975), cert. denied, 424 U.S. 958 (1976).

91 See, e.g., Allen v. Likins, 517 F.2d 532, 534-35 (8th Cir. 1975) (per curiam); Bradley v. Housing Auth., 512 F.2d 626, 628-29 (8th Cir. 1975) (per curiam); Locke v. Board of Pub. Instruction, 499 F.2d 393, 386 (5th Cir. 1974); Mc Cleary v. Realty Indus., Inc., 405 F. Supp.
or because the plaintiff was deemed no longer a suitable class representative under rule 23. Nevertheless, whatever the grounds for decision, these cases seriously limited the availability of a meaningful right of appeal from district court orders denying class certification.

**Roper and Geraghty: The Supreme Court Addresses the Problem of the Mootness of the Named Plaintiffs' Claim After Certification Denial**

Recently, in two companion cases, *Deposit Guaranty National Bank v. Roper* and *United States Parole Commission v. Geraghty*, the Supreme Court addressed for the first time the issue of whether the mootness of the named plaintiffs' individual claim subsequent to the denial of class status would deprive them of the standing requisite to challenge that ruling. An examination of these cases as well as their significance in more fully securing a meaningful right of appeal for the putative class-action plaintiff from adverse certification determinations follows.

**Deposit Guaranty National Bank v. Roper: Named Plaintiffs Held to Have Retained Personal Stake in Controversy Despite Satisfaction of Individual Claims**

The plaintiffs in *Roper* brought an action alleging that they were charged usurious rates on their credit accounts with the defendant. In addition to their individual claims, the plaintiffs sought to assert, in a representative capacity by way of class action, the claims of 90,000 similarly situated credit-card holders. The district court, however, denied the motion to certify the

---


95 445 U.S. at 327-28. The plaintiffs premised their claim on sections 5197 and 5198 of the National Bank Act, 12 U.S.C. §§ 85, 86 (1976) (amended 1979), alleging that the interest charges on the credit accounts sometimes exceeded the maximum interest rate permitted by law. Id. at 328-29.
After the plaintiffs' unsuccessful attempt to obtain interlocutory review pursuant to section 1292(b), the defendant tendered as settlement the maximum amount that each named plaintiff could have recovered. Although the plaintiffs did not accept the offer, the district court entered judgment in their favor based on the defendant's tender of payment.

Subsequently, the Roper plaintiffs again appealed the denial of class certification. Notwithstanding the defendant's contention that the case was mooted by the district court's entry of judgment for the plaintiffs, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the denial of certification. The Supreme Court subsequently granted certiorari to consider whether the tender or entry of judgment rendered the plaintiffs' claims moot, thus precluding them from seeking review of the certification ruling. Affirming the Fifth Circuit, the Court held that the plaintiffs had a continuing individual interest in the litigation that was sufficient to permit the appeal of the adverse class certification determination.

The Roper majority recognized that, as a general rule, federal appellate practice precludes a party from appealing a judgment in his favor that fully satisfies his claim on the merits. The Court...
carefully pointed out, however, that this rule does not derive from the jurisdictional limitations of article III, but rather is a self-imposed restraint on the exercise of judicial power. The Court reasoned, therefore, that “[i]n an appropriate case, appeal may be permitted from an adverse ruling collateral to the judgment on the merits at the behest of the party who has prevailed on the merits, so long as that party retains a stake in the appeal satisfying the requirements of Art. III.” Applying this rule to the case before it, the majority found that an adverse class certification ruling is by nature collateral to the merits of the controversy and that the requisite personal stake in the controversy was satisfied by the named plaintiffs’ “desire to shift part of the costs of litigation” to the putative class members who—if the class were certified and the action successful—ultimately would share in the recovery. Thus, the Court held that the denial of class certification was appealable by the plaintiffs notwithstanding their success on the merits of their individual claims. Indeed, the Court reinforced this conclusion, noting that an important consideration in its refusal to allow interlocutory appeal as of right from adverse class certification rulings was the existence of a meaningful right of appeal after final judgment. Moreover, the majority concluded, to hold otherwise would be to sanction the practice of “buying off” the plaintiffs’ in-

106 445 U.S. at 334. It is important to note that the suggestion by the Roper Court that certain collateral determinations may be appealable although a party has prevailed on the merits is not prima facie inconsistent with the conclusion of the Court in Livesay that a certification determination does not fall within the collateral order exception to the finality rule, see generally notes 76-77 and accompanying text supra. The distinction, of course, is that the Roper Court was addressing the constitutional case or controversy aspect of appealability, whereas the Court in Livesay was examining the statutorily imposed finality requirement. See generally notes 59-61 and accompanying text supra.

107 445 U.S. at 334. The Court cited its decision in Electrical Fittings Corp. v. Thomas & Betts Co., 307 U.S. 241 (1939) as an example of a previous instance where it had “perceived the distinction between the definitive mootness of a case or controversy, which ousts the jurisdiction of the federal courts and requires dismissal of the case, and a judgment in favor of a party at an intermediate stage of litigation, which does not in all cases terminate the right to appeal.” 445 U.S. at 335 (footnote omitted).

108 Id. at 336-37. Although it is fundamental in this country that adverse litigants bear their own attorney’s fees, non-litigants who will share in a recovery obtained through the efforts of a litigant can be compelled to contribute to the costs of suit under an equitable device known as the common fund doctrine. Boeing Co. v. Van Gemert, 444 U.S. 472, 481-82 (1980); Central R.R. & Banking Co. v. Pettus, 113 U.S. 116, 125-26 (1885); Trustees v. Greenough, 105 U.S. 527, 532-37 (1882).


110 Id. at 337-38 (citing Coopers & Lybrand v. Livesay, 437 U.S. 463, 469 (1978)); see notes 52-61 and accompanying text supra.
dividual claims in order to prevent appeal of the lower court’s cer-
tification ruling.\textsuperscript{111}

Notably, the decision in \textit{Roper} appears to be a logical exten-
sion of prior Supreme Court decisions. The Court has recognized,
for example, that a defendant in a suit for injunctive relief ordina-
rily will not be able to moot the plaintiff’s cause of action by vol-
untary cessation of the allegedly wrongful conduct.\textsuperscript{112} In such cases it has been reasoned that remedial conduct will not create an arti-
cle III obstacle to continuance of an action since absent an adjudica-
tion on the merits a “defendant is free to return to his old ways,”
and, furthermore, there is a public interest in resolving the legality
of the questionable practice.\textsuperscript{113} Similar considerations, it is submit-
ted, support the decision in \textit{Roper}.

Although the \textit{Roper} Court confined its holding to the narrow
facts before it,\textsuperscript{114} thus apparently limiting its applicability only to
class actions for monetary relief where the defendants have at-
ttempted by their own act to render the plaintiff’s claim moot, the
decision nevertheless represents a significant step by the Court to-
ward ensuring the existence of a meaningful right of appeal from a
denial of class certification. Through a liberal interpretation of the

\textsuperscript{111} 445 U.S. at 339. In a strong dissent, Justice Powell disagreed with the majority’s
application of settled article III principles. \textit{Id.} at 346 (Powell, J., dissenting). In particular,
dissent rejected the majority’s conclusion that the named plaintiffs were possessed of
the requisite personal stake by their desire to shift part of the litigation costs to members of
the putative class. \textit{Id.} at 351 (Powell, J., dissenting). Such a personal stake, Justice Powell
observed, was “conspicuously vague” where, in a case such as this, the named plaintiffs’
counsel were retained on a contingent fee basis. \textit{Id.} (Powell, J., dissenting). Thus, he con-
cluded that the desire to shift fees was entirely speculative and “wholly irrelevant to the
existence of a present controversy” in the absence of an explanation of how the named
plaintiffs’ “obligation to pay 25% of their recovery to counsel could be reduced if a class is
certified and its members become similarly obligated to pay 25% of their recovery.” \textit{Id.}
(Powell, J., dissenting).

\textsuperscript{112} United States v. W.T. Grant Co., 345 U.S. 629, 632-33 (1953); accord, County of Los
767-68 (N.D. Miss. 1980). \textit{See generally} L. Trne., \textit{supra note} 7, at 66-67; \textit{see, e.g.}, Quincy
1980); Central Soya Co. v. Consolidated Rail Corp., 614 F.2d 684, 687 n.6 (7th Cir. 1980);

\textsuperscript{113} United States v. W.T. Grant Co., 345 U.S. 629, 632 (1953). \textit{See also} Atlantic Rich-
field Co. v. Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Int'l Union, 447 F.2d 945, 947 (7th Cir. 1971).
The \textit{W.T. Grant} Court noted, however, that voluntary cessation may cause mootness where
there is a “reasonable expectation” that the wrong will not reoccur. 345 U.S. at 633; \textit{see}
United States v. Phosphate Export Ass'n, 393 U.S. 199, 203 (1968); United States v. Alumi-
num Co. of America, 148 F.2d 416, 448 (2d Cir. 1945).

\textsuperscript{114} \textit{See} 445 U.S. at 332-33.
case or controversy requirement of article III, the Supreme Court has held for the first time that an aggrieved party may appeal an adverse certification determination notwithstanding the expiration of his individual claim—the constitutional requisites being satisfied by the plaintiffs' economic interest in distributing the costs of the litigation among the putative class. Significantly by not discussing the basis or merits of the Roper plaintiffs' attorneys' fee claim, the Court has suggested that even the mere allegation of a desire to shift fees will be sufficient to satisfy the continuing stake requirement of article III.


John M. Geraghty, a prisoner in a federal penitentiary, brought an action challenging the validity of federal parole release guidelines. Prior to trial, Geraghty sought to have certified a class of plaintiffs composed of "all federal prisoners who are or who will become eligible for release on parole." The district court denied the certification motion and granted the defendant's summary judgment request. While his appeal from these rulings was pending in the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, the plaintiff was released from prison. The defendants then moved to dismiss Geraghty's appeal as moot. The Third Circuit, finding that the claim was not moot, entertained the plaintiff's appeal from the adverse certification determination and reversed the district court.

---

116 Id. at 340.
117 See note 111 and accompanying text supra.
119 445 U.S. at 393.
119 Id. The district court, which regarded Geraghty's suit as a petition for a writ of habeas corpus, found certification "neither necessary nor appropriate." Id. Moreover, reaching the merits of the case, the district court upheld the guidelines as valid. Id. at 393-94.
120 Id. at 394. The plaintiff's release was mandatory, since he had served his full sentence less time for which he had earned "good time" credits. Id.
The Supreme Court granted certiorari to consider whether a certification denial could properly be appealed notwithstanding that the individual claim of the named plaintiff had become moot, and ultimately held that such review would not contravene article III.\textsuperscript{123}

Writing for the Court, Justice Blackmun acknowledged the importance of the existence of a meaningful right of final judgment appeal.\textsuperscript{124} As it had done in \textit{Roper}, the Court found that a live controversy existed as to the plaintiff's desire to achieve class certification notwithstanding that Geraghty's individual claim had become moot.\textsuperscript{125} Indeed, the majority noted, the class suit presents two legal controversies—the issue on the merits and the named

\textsuperscript{122} 579 F.2d at 252-54. Addressing the threshold question of whether the plaintiff could appeal the denial of certification, the Third Circuit reasoned that since expiration of Geraghty's individual claim would not have rendered the controversy moot if a class had been certified at the trial level before his release, "an erroneous denial of a class certification should not lead to an opposite result." See 445 U.S. at 394. Thus, the court of appeals held that subsequent certification of such a class would relate back to the time of the district court denial, thereby preserving jurisdiction. \textit{Id.}

\textsuperscript{123} 445 U.S. at 390, 407.

\textsuperscript{124} \textit{Id.} at 400.

\textsuperscript{125} \textit{Id.} at 404. In support of its conclusion that the case was not moot, the Court surveyed other cases in which it had occasion to consider the "personal stake" requirement of article III in the class action context. \textit{Id.} at 397-401. First the Court observed that in \textit{Sosna v. Iowa}, 419 U.S. 393 (1975), it had held that once a class had been certified, the suit will continue notwithstanding the subsequent mootness of the named plaintiff's individual claim, \textit{id.} at 400. 445 U.S. at 397. Thus, the \textit{Sosna} decision made clear "that an Art. III case or controversy 'may exist . . . between a named defendant and a member of the class represented by the named plaintiff, even though the claim of the named plaintiff has become moot.'" 445 U.S. at 397-98 (quoting \textit{Sosna v. Iowa}, 419 U.S. at 402 (footnote omitted)). Second, citing \textit{Gerstein v. Pugh}, 420 U.S. 103 (1975), the Court stated that the timing of the certification should not be crucial. 445 U.S. at 398. In \textit{Gerstein}, the Court permitted an appeal on the merits in a class action challenging a state's pretrial detention procedures notwithstanding that the detention had ended prior to a final adjudication on the merits. Noting that the nature of the detention was such that it could end before an adjudication on the merits, or before any named plaintiff could obtain class certification, the Court held that the appeal was not moot under the "capable of repetition, yet evading review" exception to the finality doctrine. 420 U.S. at 110 n.11. Thus under this exception, it is possible for a class action to continue despite the fact that the named plaintiff's claim became moot prior to certification.

Finally, the majority cited \textit{United Airlines, Inc. v. McDonald}, 432 U.S. 385 (1977), where the Court held that a putative class member could intervene after the named plaintiff's personal claim became moot, by virtue of a judgment on the merits. 432 U.S. at 393-95; see 445 U.S. at 400. Concluding that these cases and the Court's decision earlier that day in \textit{Roper} demonstrated the flexible character of the article III mootness doctrine, 445 U.S. at 400, the Court determined that Geraghty retained a sufficient personal stake in class certification to appeal an adverse certification determination notwithstanding the mootness of his individual claim on the merits. \textit{Id.} at 407.
plaintiff's right to represent the class. Since the certification denial remained a "concrete, sharply presented issue," the Court held that the case or controversy requirement of article III was satisfied.\footnote{126}{445 U.S. at 403-04. As in \textit{Roper}, Justice Powell authored a lengthy dissenting opinion. \textit{Id.} at 409-424 (Powell, J., dissenting); see note 113 \textit{supra}. Analyzing prior decisions, the dissent challenged the correctness of both the majority decision that the article III personal stake requirement be applied flexibly, 445 U.S. at 409-19 (Powell, J., dissenting), and the Court's specific holding that \textit{Geraghty} satisfied that requirement, \textit{id.} at 419-24 (Powell, J., dissenting).}

Although the Supreme Court decision in \textit{Geraghty} yielded the same result achieved in \textit{Roper}—the named plaintiff was allowed to appeal the denial of class certification notwithstanding that his individual claim subsequently became moot—the \textit{Geraghty} holding appears far more pervasive than \textit{Roper}. Notably, the majority opinion in \textit{Geraghty} spoke in much broader terms than had been used in \textit{Roper}. Rather than insisting on the importance of the facts before it, the Court seemingly established a general right of appeal from adverse class certification denials despite any allegations of the mootness of an individual's personal claim.\footnote{127}{In \textit{Roper}, the Court suggested that mootness was avoided because the continuing economic interest possessed by the plaintiffs—the desire to shift attorney's fees—kept alive the controversy on the merits. 445 U.S. at 332-33. In \textit{Geraghty}, on the other hand, the Court stated that the plaintiff's interest in the merits was distinct and separable from his interest in obtaining class certification, and that the mootness of the claim did not deprive him of the personal stake requisite to appealing the denial of certification. 445 U.S. at 402.} In addition, the \textit{Geraghty} decision extended the flexible reading of article III to suits for equitable relief as well as for damages.\footnote{128}{See 445 U.S. at 393.} More importantly, however, the Court declined to limit its earlier decision to instances where mootness resulted from affirmative action on the part of the defendant. In \textit{Geraghty}, the Supreme Court found no difference between mootness caused by "expiration" of the individual claim and a favorable judgment-induced mootness, ruling that "\textit{Geraghty}'s 'personal stake' in the outcome of the litigation is, in a practical sense, no different than that of the putative class representative in \textit{Roper}."\footnote{129}{\textit{Id.} at 401.} The Court's express refusal to distinguish between the continuing interests of the named plaintiffs in \textit{Roper} and \textit{Geraghty} is perhaps the most significant aspect of the decision. In \textit{Roper}, the Court found a continuing individual interest satisfying the article III case or controversy requirement in the named plaintiff's desire to shift attorney's fees to the other mem-
bers of the class. A similar economic interest, however, was not present in Geraghty. Rather, in the latter case, the Court analogized the would-be representative's interest to a "private attorney general's" interest in achieving class certification.

Previously, the Court had suggested that where the named plaintiff's claim expired prior to certification, resort to the fiction of relation back might be one way in which to find the personal stake requisite to pursuing class certification. The employment of this fiction, the Court had cautioned, was appropriate only where the issue was capable of repetition but evading review. Al-

---

130 Id. at 336.
131 Id. at 403.
132 In Sosna v. Iowa, 419 U.S. 393 (1975), the Court held that where the plaintiff's individual claim became moot subsequent to certification, the class claim could be continued provided that the named plaintiff's claim was viable at the time the complaint was filed and at the time of certification, and also that at every stage thereafter a live controversy existed between a member of the class and a named defendant. Id. at 402. With respect to the requirement that the named plaintiff possess a viable claim at the time of certification, however, the Court qualified its statement in a footnote stating:

There may be cases in which the controversy involving the named plaintiffs is such that it becomes moot as to them before the district court can reasonably be expected to rule on a certification motion. In such instances, whether the certification can be said to "relate back" to the filing of the complaint may depend upon the circumstances of the particular case and especially the reality of the claim that otherwise the issue would evade review.

Id. at n.11.
133 Id. at 402 n.11. The possibility that the validity of the Parole Release Guidelines might evade review was not present in Geraghty since the plaintiff's attorney candidly conceded that were the Court to declare the case moot, he would simply reinstitute a similar action on behalf of other parties whose interests would outlast the litigation. 445 U.S. at 414 n.7 (Powell, J., dissenting).

The potential that an issue might recur and yet evade review, which the Sosna Court indicated might justify a fictional relation back of the grant of certification, has been employed frequently by the Court to determine whether the continued prosecution of a certified class action was precluded by the intervening mootness of the named plaintiff's cause of action. In Sosna, the Court held that where the issue was capable of repetition, yet evading review with respect to any member of the certified class, a justiciable controversy was presented, and thereby justified the continued prosecution of the action notwithstanding the expiration of the putative class representative's claim. Id. at 401-02. Subsequently, in Board of School Commissioners of Indianapolis v. Jacobs, 420 U.S. 128 (1975) (per curiam), the Court appeared to elevate the "capable of repetition, yet evading review" element to the status of an article I requirement to continuation where the claims of the named plaintiff had become moot. Indeed, the Jacobs Court stated:

The case is therefore moot unless it was duly certified as a class action pursuant to Fed. Rule Civ. Proc. 23, a controversy still exists between petitioners and the present members of the class, and the issue in controversy is such that it is capable of repetition yet evading review.

Id. at 129 (emphasis added). In Franks v. Bowman Transp. Co., 424 U.S. 747 (1976), however, the Court retreated from the position seemingly espoused in Jacobs, stating that
though noting the existence of this fiction, however, the Geraghty Court did not invoke such reasoning.\textsuperscript{134} Rather, it based its finding on the plaintiff's continuing interest in obtaining class certification.\textsuperscript{135} The wellspring of this interest, however, is nowhere discussed. Indeed, on close inspection, it appears that the Court acknowledged the existence of a right to obtain class certification which survives the expiration of the individual claim that originally served as the predicate under rule 23 for the institution of the class action.\textsuperscript{136} The practical import of such a rule, at least with respect to certification appeals, is to render virtually indefeasible a valid article III interest present at the inception of the action and to allow a named plaintiff to bootstrap his way into an appeal of the certification denial.

\textbf{CLASS-CERTIFICATION APPEALS AFTER ROPER AND GERAGHTY}

Although the Court has apparently made the relation back fiction absolutely applicable for the purpose of satisfying the case or controversy requirement,\textsuperscript{137} it should not be presumed that the liberalization of the constitutional standard will facilitate the appeal of class certification rulings in all cases. For parties aggrieved by such rulings, the conjunctive requisite to appealability—final-
APPEAL OF CERTIFICATION DENIALS

At least with respect to the typical consumer class action, one result of the relaxation of the article III barrier to appealability is sure to be the refusal of the putative class defendant to settle with the named plaintiffs after certification has been denied. Clearly, in Roper, it was just such an attempt to satisfy the claims of the putative class action representative, under the guise of a nuisance settlement, which when judicially enforced gave rise to the plaintiffs' right to appeal the certification ruling. In the absence of the defendant's tender—the very act which mooted the plaintiffs' individual claims—there is no doubt after Livesay that the plaintiffs would have been precluded from appealing the certification denial as of right for want of a final judgment. 198 By holding, however, that an attempted "buy out" of the named plaintiffs will not deprive them of the standing to contest the validity of a class certification denial140 and, moreover, will provide the finality requisite to such appeal, the Court as a practical matter has reversed the operation of the in terrorem effect of a class-action judgment. 141 Where previously it appeared to be in the defendant's interest to attempt to satisfy the individual claim of the named plaintiff so as to deprive him of the capacity 142 as well as the incentive to appeal a

138 See note 3 and accompanying text supra. Notably, the Court in Roper gave some indication that attempts to obtain review of certification denials pursuant to section 1292(b) should be viewed more favorably. See 445 U.S. at 336 n.8.

139 See notes 59-61 and accompanying text supra.

140 445 U.S. at 339-40.

141 The grant of class certification, which raises the specter of ruinous liability, often operates to coerce the defendants into settlement notwithstanding their probability of success on the merits. See AMERICAN COLLEGE OF TRIAL LAWYERS, REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON RULE 23 OF THE FEDERAL RULES OF CIVIL PROCEDURE 15-17 (1972). In this context, Professor Handler has called the class suit a "form of legalized blackmail." Handler, The Shift From Substantive to Procedural Innovations in Antitrust Suits—The Twenty-Third Annual Antitrust Review, 71 COLUM. L. REV. 1, 9 (1971). The Second Circuit, recognizing that "these cases are settled even though the validity of the plaintiff's claims are doubtful," devised a reverse death knell doctrine, permitting class-action defendants to appeal as of right the grant of class certification. Herbst v. International Tel. & Tel. Corp., 495 F.2d 1308, 1312-13 (2d Cir. 1974).

142 Where the named plaintiff's claim has become moot by virtue of the defendant's tender of payment or cessation of wrongful conduct prior to certification, some courts have refused appellate review of the class certification denial. See Banks v. Multi-Family Mgmt., Inc., 554 F.2d 127, 128-29 (4th Cir. 1977); Bradley v. Housing Auth., 512 F.2d 626, 627-29 (8th Cir. 1975). In Bradley, for instance, although the Eighth Circuit noted that prior to certification "the defendants deliberately mooted the issue as to the named plaintiffs or intervenors to avoid judicial review," the court still dismissed the suit on mootness grounds. Id. at 628-29. Indeed, since the Supreme Court had stated that "it is only a 'properly certi-
class certification denial, after *Roper* a class defendant's best tactical posture apparently is to do nothing, thereby forcing the named plaintiff to litigate his individual claim on the merits in order to obtain a final judgment from which appeal of the certification ruling is possible. Indeed, class action defendants now have everything to lose and nothing to gain by attempting to reach an accord with the named plaintiffs subsequent to the denial of class status.

Clearly, however, not all putative class representatives will be unable to satisfy the finality requirement. By not discussing the issue, however, *Geraghty* implicitly suggests that where a nonjudicial occurrence is the cause of the mootness of the plaintiff's individual claim, the resulting dismissal will constitute the requisite final judgment from which the certification appeal may be taken. In such instance, of course, the relaxation of the strictures of artifed class that may succeed to the adversary position of a named representative whose claim becomes moot," *Kremens v. Bartley*, 431 U.S. 119, 132-33 (1977); *see* *Vun Cannon v. Breed*, 565 F.2d 1096, 1098-1101 (9th Cir. 1977); *Winokur v. Bell Fed. Sav. & Loan Ass'n*, 560 F.2d 271, 276-77 (7th Cir. 1977), *cert. denied*, 435 U.S. 932 (1978), prior to *Roper* and *Geraghty*, a class-action defendant had a tenable expectation that by mooting the named plaintiffs' claims he could prevent them from obtaining class certification and thus possibly avoid class suit.


The entry of judgment in favor of the putative class adversary will generally satisfy the *Livesay* finality requirement for purposes of appellate review of the certification denial. *See*, e.g., *Horn v. Associated Wholesale Grocers, Inc.*, 555 F.2d 270, 274-75 (10th Cir. 1977); *Long v. Sapp*, 502 F.2d 34, 36, 42-43 (5th Cir. 1974); *Moss v. Lane Co.*, 471 F.2d 853, 854-55 (4th Cir. 1973).

Nowhere in the *Geraghty* opinion is the finality requirement of 28 U.S.C. § 1291 (1976) even mentioned. In contrast, where the dismissal is the result of the plaintiff's actions, such as a failure to prosecute, the courts have refused to permit appeal of the certification denial, holding that such a dismissal is an attempt by the plaintiff to circumvent the policy of 28 U.S.C. § 1291 (1976). In *Huey v. Teledyne*, 608 F.2d 1234 (9th Cir. 1979), for example, the plaintiff made no appearance at trial after the district court denied his motion for class certification. The district court dismissed the case for want of prosecution and, thereafter, the plaintiff appealed the denial of class certification under section 1291. *Id.* at 1236. Citing to *Livesay*, the Ninth Circuit stated that "[j]ust as the policy against piecemeal appeals precludes the appeal of an order denying class certification—even where that may sound the 'death knell' of an action—so it precludes review of that order from a proper dismissal for failure to prosecute which results from that order." *Id.* at 1239. The court further noted that when the plaintiff fails to prosecute the suit after the denial of class certification, "that ruling does not merge in the final judgment for purposes of appellate review." *Id.* at 1240. *See also* *Marshall v. Sielaff*, 492 F.2d 917, 918 (3d Cir. 1974). Recently, in *Bowe v. First of Denver Mortgage Investors*, 613 F.2d 798 (10th Cir.), *cert. denied*, 100 S. Ct. 2989 (1980), the Tenth Circuit reaffirmed *Huey*, noting that "[t]he Supreme Court's decision in [Livesay] was a positive one which does not tolerate creation of a loophole by the simple device of allowing the claim of a class representative to be dismissed for lack of prosecution." 613 F.2d at 801.
The effect upon a putative class suit where the named plaintiff's individual claim is deemed meritless has not been resolved uniformly by the federal courts. The Fifth Circuit, for instance, has held that in such circumstances the suit will be dismissed unless the named plaintiff had a sufficient nexus with the class so as to satisfy rule 23(a)(3). See Armour v. City of Anniston, 597 F.2d 46, 48-50 (5th Cir. 1979), vacated, 445 U.S. 940 (1980); Camper v. Calumet Petrochemicals Inc., 584 F.2d 70, 71-72 (5th Cir. 1978); Satterwhite v. City of Greenville, 578 F.2d 987, 990-91 (5th Cir. 1978) (en banc), vacated, 445 U.S. 940 (1980). The necessity that the plaintiff have a "nexus" with the putative class was derived from East Tex. Motor Freight Sys., Inc. v. Rodriguez, 431 U.S. 395 (1977), where the Supreme Court stated that "[t]he mere fact that a complaint alleges [wrongful conduct] does not in itself ensure that the party who has brought the lawsuit will be an adequate representative of those who may have been the real victims of that [conduct]." Id. at 405-06. The Fourth Circuit and some lower courts, however, have permitted class suits to continue, notwithstanding a determination that the plaintiff's claim lacked merit. See Goodman v. Schlesinger, 584 F.2d 1325, 1332-33 (4th Cir. 1978); Cox v. Babcock & Wilcox Co., 471 F.2d 13, 16 (4th Cir. 1972); La Reau v. Manson, 383 F. Supp. 214, 218-19 (D. Conn. 1974); Taylor v. Springmeier Shipping Co., 15 Fed. R. Serv. 2d 1233, 1234 (W.D. Tenn. 1971). In Goodman, for example, the court deemed the named plaintiff's claim meritless, but in light of evidence that a class controversy might exist, remanded the suit to the district court in order to permit a putative class member to intervene and argue the certification issue. 584 F.2d at 1331-33. See generally Comment, The Headless Class Action: The Effect of a Named Plaintiff's Pre-Certification Loss of A Personal Stake, supra note 86, at 151-63; Note, Satterwhite v. City of Greenville and Breathing New Life into the Headless Title VII Class Action., 32 Stan. L. Rev. 743 (1980). Notably, the Supreme Court has vacated Armour and Satterwhite for further consideration by the Court of Appeals. Satterwhite v. City of Greenville, 445 U.S. 940 (1980); Armour v. City of Anniston, 445 U.S. 940 (1980).

whether the named plaintiff may adequately represent the class where class status is not granted at the outset of the litigation "is appropriately made on the full record, including the facts developed at the trial of the plaintiff's individual claims." It is submitted that where the adjudication that the would-be representative's claims were meritless reflects his lack of nexus to the injured class and not the validity of the cause of action shared by the class, the adverse individual judgment militates against allowing the putative class representative to contest the denial of certification. On the other hand, the expiration of the plaintiff's individual claim for reasons other than an adverse determination on the merits, for example a nonjudicial occurrence, seemingly should not indicate—at least for the purpose of appealing the certification denial—the undesirability of his continued representation of the class.

Iowa, 419 U.S. at 403).

148 East Texas Motor Freight Sys., Inc. v. Rodriguez, 431 U.S. 395, 406 n.12 (1977). In focusing on the requirement of fair and adequate representation, Rodriguez recognized that in some civil cases a named plaintiff may represent the putative class notwithstanding the lack of merit in his individual claim. Id.

Proper representation is a crucial element to the class action, and the courts have stressed that the representative's interests must coalesce with those of the absent class members. See Albertson's, Inc. v. Amalgamated Sugar Co., 503 F.2d 459, 463-64 (10th Cir. 1974); Schy v. Susquehanna Corp., 419 F.2d 1112, 1116-17 (7th Cir.), cert. denied, 400 U.S. 826 (1970). As one court has stated, "[b]ecause members of the class are bound—even though they may not actually be aware of the proceedings—by the judgment in a Rule 23 action unless they affirmatively exercise their option to be excluded, the requirement of adequate representation must be stringently applied." Alameda Oil Co. v. Ideal Indus., Inc., 326 F. Supp. 98, 103 (D. Colo. 1974). See Hansberry v. Lee, 311 U.S. 32, 44-45 (1940); Comment, The Class Representative: The Problem of the Absent Plaintiffs, 68 Nw. U.L. Rev. 1133 (1974).

Rule 23(a)'s requirement that the class representative have an interest common with the class does not appear to be met when the named plaintiff's claim is rendered meritless and there is no nexus between the plaintiff and the class. See Shipp v. Tenn. Dep't of Employment Security, 581 F.2d 1167, 1172 (6th Cir. 1978), cert. denied, 440 U.S. 980 (1979); Satterwhite v. City of Greenville, 578 F.2d 987, 991 (5th Cir. 1978) (en banc), vacated, 445 U.S. 940 (1980); Huff v. N.D. Cass Co., 485 F.2d 710 (5th Cir. 1973); Moss v. Lane Co., 471 F.2d 853, 855-56 (4th Cir. 1973). Furthermore, the ability of the named plaintiff to represent the putative class is critical to appellate review, for in its absence the court "need not reach the issue whether the plaintiff has the requisite standing to sue." Satterwhite v. City of Greenville, 578 F.2d 987, 991 (5th Cir. 1978) (en banc), vacated, 445 U.S. 940 (1980).

Where the named plaintiff's claim has expired for reasons other than an adjudication on the merits, it appears that the named plaintiff has a sufficient typicality of interest with the putative class so as to be capable of appealing the certification denial. See United States Parole Comm'n v. Geraghty, 445 U.S. at 404-07; Sosna v. Iowa, 419 U.S. at 402-03; McGill v. Parsons, 532 F.2d 484, 488-89 (5th Cir. 1976); Conover v. Montemuro, 477 F.2d 1073, 1081-82 (3d Cir. 1973); Rivera v. Freeman, 469 F.2d 1159, 1163 (9th Cir. 1972).
CONCLUSION

Despite its coercive potential, the class action frequently constitutes the only viable means to redress injuries which, although suffered by a large number of persons, when measured individually against the time, effort, and expense of the litigation would prove economically insubstantial. In large part because the in terrorem effect of a class judgment often induces a defendant to settle the action, even where he might reasonably expect to prevail on the merits, judicial aversion to the class suit is often manifest. Indeed, one notable example of this has been the strict application of the final decision rule of section 1291, mandated by the Supreme Court in Livesay, to prevent interlocutory review of class certification denials. Nevertheless, because finality continues to present a formidable obstacle to the maintenance of class suits, recent Supreme Court decisions allowing appeal of certification rulings by parties whose individual claims have become moot evince a judicial unwillingness to erect further barriers to the maintenance of class suits. While these decisions, by focusing on the constitutional aspect of appealability, have left Livesay unaffected, they nonetheless appear to indicate that Livesay is the high watermark of the pro-class defendant decisional law and, indeed, may portend an eventual retreat from that decision. Until such time, however, the finality requirement continues to be a pervasive impediment to appellate review. Roper and Geraghty, therefore, can be expected to advance only marginally the realization of a meaningful right of review for parties aggrieved by an adverse class certification ruling.

Henry John Kupperman