

Drug facility hearing closed to the public

By Kathryn Stroeber
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Cobb County Superior Court Judge Dorothy Robinson today threw out two of five cases filed by the American Civil Liberties Union against the STRAIGHT Inc. drug rehabilitation center then closed the remainder of the proceedings to the press and public today.

The ACLU had filed writs of habeas corpus — “to produce the bodies” — on behalf of five teenagers who it says were being held against their wills by the drug rehabilitation center on Austell Road in Marietta.

Robinson today dismissed the action filed on behalf of Travis ██████ 18, after he testified that he had in “no way” been forcefully detained by STRAIGHT.

The judge also dismissed an action filed for Janice ██████ 17, when STRAIGHT’s attorney, Robert Grayson, said Miss Brock was in Florida and not under the control of Dave Tilley, director of STRAIGHT.

Ms. Robinson asked reporters and the public to leave the hearings after Grayson moved for a secret session because some of the parties were minors.

An Atlanta Newspapers reporter filed a motion to object to Robinson’s closure of the hearing. The judge did not act on the motion immediately and the courtroom was closed to the press and public and locked while the hearing proceeded in secret.

The judge also ordered potential witnesses and family members not to talk to the press.

But Gene Guerrero, executive director of the Georgia ACLU, said the action was taken against STRAIGHT because “we had no other choice. We’d received serious complaints about the operation of the program and we were refused admittance to the center.

“We learned the program was unlicensed. We don’t have any expertise in drug treatment programs. Our interest is in trying to see basic rights protected,” Guerrero said.