

# People looking for 'their MGM past'

## Feiffer: closet groups abound

By KENT KULLBY  
Of the Emerald

Jules Feiffer, celebrated cartoonist, playwright and social commentator, analyzed today's society and the fall of "MGM's American Dream" as featured speaker at the Law School Commencement ceremony last Saturday.

Feiffer characterized American society as divided into closet groups, "a corporate America, an ethnic America, a Washington America...the number of groups is endless," each with its own beliefs and constitutions, he said.

"This is why corporations can overthrow third-world countries and put cancer-causing ingredients in their products," Feiffer said. "They have only their own closet group to answer to." A judge who pardons a rapist because his victim asked for it by wearing tight jeans, or a judge who pardons rioters after they killed a nurse,

trampled a pregnant woman and ransacked an abortion clinic, because "it was necessary to save lives," are all reacting out of their own closet beliefs, according to Feiffer.

Speaking to the law graduates, he predicted that each of them will "form their own closets and be ignorant of others."

He said these closet groups have always been around but were "less noticeable under the umbrella of the American Dream," which was conceived, expounded and propagated "to the point of becoming a state religion."

The American Dream is "where any lad can forget the past and become president of a corporation or the country, and any girl can become the spouse of either," Feiffer said.

The propagators of this dream were movies that have provided role models from Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford to Robert Redford and Farah

Fawcett-Majors, according to Feiffer. He called it "the whitening of America" and said people are always "nostalgically looking for their MGM past."

The reality behind the dream first became apparent in the 1960s with the black civil rights and anti-war movements. Finally with the demise of the Nixon administration in the early 1970s, Feiffer said, "Optimism has been replaced by realism."

"Doctors are after the buck; capitalists are after the buck; it's fought for and it's killed for," said Feiffer. He says "we have seen the limits of growth and 'the American Dream has been replaced by the American Trauma.'"

Feiffer addressed the graduates: "You're out of the '60s and almost into the '80s. You're not lost; you're not revolutionary; you're not hippies; you're not labeled. Clearly you do not exist."

Another attitude change from the '60s that Feiffer noted has been from activism to passivism, as reflected by the President.

He said, "We have elected a passive president who has opinions on everything and action on none. We have put a columnist in office."

Feiffer said he feels the '70s is the death of the American Dream.

"Gradually we will recover, and the 1980s will witness a new mythology to test our present with and to replace the pipe dreams of the past," said Feiffer, adding "I pray we come up with it soon, and I pray it works."



Jules Feiffer: 'Clearly you do not exist'

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