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Rose Bird to receive award in Eugene

Former chief justice speaks out

By Eric Bottjer
Emerald Contributor

Rose Bird says there's one reason why she's not in office today.

"It's called money," said the former chief justice of the California Supreme Court.

Last November, Bird, appointed by then-Gov. Jerry Brown in 1977, became the first California judge to lose a reconfirmation vote since that state adopted the procedure in 1934.

Bird visits Eugene on Saturday to accept the first Wayne Morse Award for Political Integrity. Morse was a 24-year U.S. Senator who openly opposed U.S. military involvement in Vietnam, a stance that cost him his senatorial seat. The Lane County Democratic Party is sponsoring the event.

In conversation, Bird comes across as she did in her televised campaign advertisements: low-key and professional. Controversy does not come to mind, although that was the word most often used in front of Bird's name during her nine-year tenure on California's highest court.

The controversy swirled around Bird's rulings on death penalty cases. She voted to overturn 61 death sentences imposed by lower courts, saying in each case the prosecution did not prove intent to kill.

Rumblings of a backlash began early during Bird's term and peaked the last two years she held office. Her opponents called themselves "Bird hunters" and were well-funded. One conservative group, Crime Victims for Court Reform,

raised more than \$6 million to oust Bird. Bird claims such groups raised \$20 million before the November 1986 election.

Bird says blaming the death penalty issue for her defeat is a half-truth. "The people defeated us (two other justices lost reconfirmation bids along with Bird) based on that issue. But that's not why \$20 million was spent.

"The governor (Republican George Deukmejian) wanted a majority in the court, and there were powerful interests against us. They had the money and we didn't," she says.

Bird's opponents spent the money effectively, as evidenced by the 2-1 voter margin that defeated her. Much was spent on a television advertising blitz, which drew on viewer emotions. One showed a grieving mother asking the audience why her 12-year-old daughter's killer was still alive. The commercial closed with a faceless narrator intoning, "Vote no on Chief Justice Rose Bird."

"The right needed an emotional issue to win, and the death penalty issue was there," Bird says. "I think the people generally agreed with the court's direction."

When asked if she personally felt the death penalty was appropriate punishment in certain cases, Bird pauses, then says, "I think it's up to society as a whole to decide. The majority should make the decision."

While Bird had little money to defend herself against her attackers, she also had little support.

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Courtesy photo

Former California Supreme Court Chief Justice Rose Bird will receive the Wayne Morse Award for Political Integrity this weekend in Eugene.

University women's groups facing numerous challenges

By Carolyn Lamberson
Emerald Associate Editor

Recent difficulties the ASUO had in trying to find a Women's Task Force coordinator have brought a question about women's groups to light: What problems are faced by women's groups on campus?

It is a question that has many variations and possible answers. The task force position has been open times since May. As of Wednesday, ASUO President Kasey Brooks had received three applications. As few applicants as this may seem to some, other application opportunities garnered only one application.

The only reason for the lack of interest in the task force Brooks can pinpoint relates to the cancellation of last spring's Women's Symposium. Aside from working on day-to-day women's issues, the coordinator helps organize the Women's Symposium.

Under charges of minority exclusion in planning the symposium, the ASUO Executive voted to cancel the annual spring event, and \$3,000 in student incidental fees were lost.

Brooks said maybe people didn't want to "stick their necks out" to be involved, or maybe students don't want the women's symposium held every year, she said. "I can't image this is true," she added.

Former task force coordinator Shannon Meehan said that position is always hired later in the year, but added she doesn't know if women see the task force position as an incredible opportunity for women to get involved with.

"The level of responsibility scares people off," she said, but the position is far from ominous. "Obviously you would have to have efficient time-management skills," she added.

The difficulty of the Women's Task Force lends itself to other issues surrounding women's groups and the women's movement in general.

Sue Frazier, co-director of Women in Transition, said her group faces a public relations problem. Frazier believes many students don't know about the service because they see the name "Women in Transition" and are unclear as to the definition of a woman in transition, she said.

The group acts as a starting point for older women who are re-entering the college atmosphere, Frazier explained.

"People may think we're a real political-type organization," Frazier said. "I think we are by virtue of being a women's organiza-

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Park remains a tribute to Morse

By Angela Muniz
Emerald Editorial Editor

The Wayne Morse Historical Park stands as a peaceful tribute to the former law school dean and U.S. Senator from Oregon. The 26-acre park, located at 595

Crest Dr. in South Eugene, contains photographs of Morse, a collection of political cartoons and commemorative plaques.

The park was originally the Morse ranch. When Morse died in 1974, however, community members worked with the city to convert the proper-

ty into a park.

"The neighbors didn't want to lose the ranch and wanted to commemorate Morse," said Ernie Drapela of Eugene Parks and Recreation.

Charles Porter, a Eugene attorney and friend of Morse, also was involved in establishing the park. "Wayne Morse was a mentor of mine since we served in Congress together. He had thought of selling the property, but when he died many of us thought it would make a good park," Porter said.

With the consent of Morse's wife, Mildred, the city bought the property and since then has taken over the maintenance of the ranch, Porter said.

Because the ranch is located in a residential area and is large, funding was a problem. The park currently receives open-space funds, which requires the property to remain undeveloped, Drapela said.

Because of this stipulation only half of the Morse house is covered by funds. The first floor of the house is open for meetings and small weddings, but the second story serves as living quarters for Nancy Craft, the caretaker.

Craft has looked after the house for eight years. She oversees the operation of the park and handles reservations.

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Photo by Angela Muniz

The study of the late Wayne Morse has been left unchanged since his death in 1974. The study contains his original desk and typewriter.