

Wave of opposition may wipe out Thomas

When U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall resigned from his seat on the Supreme Court it marked the end of an era. Marshall was an integral part of many of the court's more famous civil rights rulings. The court's first black justice was the champion of many liberal causes.

Depending on whom one talks to, the opinions about Marshall's performance on the bench vary widely. Conservatives say he was an ideologue wanting to legislate from the judicial branch. But in the eyes of the people who struggle for civil rights, abortion rights and many of the other freedoms allegedly available in America, Marshall was a justice who understood what it was like to face bigotry and oppression.

That's why it comes as no surprise that George Bush's recent nomination of U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court has caused a stir in Washington. As the Bush camp has been sure to stress, Thomas was brought up in poverty — he lived in a sharecropper's shack — in Georgia before segregation was abolished. He worked his way up from those humble beginnings to his present position as a nominee to the highest court in the country. Like Marshall, Thomas's background should make him more sensitive to the problems of minorities. But unlike Marshall, Thomas does not have a strong belief in affirmative action efforts.

Because of his beliefs Thomas has fallen under criticism previously. As chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission during the Reagan administration, his actions angered many minority groups such as women, blacks, Hispanics, the handicapped and the elderly.

Those same groups are now coming out in to oppose his nomination to the high court.

The opposition to Justice David Souter's nomination did not rise quite so swiftly and loudly when he was first appointed. Thomas faces some tough questioning ahead. For his part, he is keeping his comments to the press short. If opposition to Thomas's appointment continues to grow, Bush might find that his latest nominee is the first to put a new verb into use: He may get "Borked."



LETTERS

True gritism

Most of the "politically correct" themes, from either diametric pole, are based on patently absurd truisms.

For example, take the homosexuals trying to justify their rebellious lifestyle by saying they were born that way. Granted, the sexual drive is inherent, but the focus thereof is learned behavior.

The reasoning which rationalizes homosexuality would also endorse adultery, incest, bestiality and fetishism. Does anyone expect me to believe a shoe fetishist is programmed by genetics? No doubt some evolutionist will attempt to ...

I certainly don't want such "free thinkers" molding society. And spare me the truism that anything would be better than bloody King George.

Dennis Moran
Eugene

Stay away

I would like this community to know that I am disgusted with the Oregon House of Representatives Republican leadership for their shabby manipulation and denial of a hearing and vote on Senate Bill 708, the so-called "Gay Rights Bill."

As a gay person, I feel that this attitude hurts all people and not only those of us who would immediately benefit from its passage into law. Unlike many gay people who have lobbied for this bill, I have a business with products that are distributed and respected nationally. I am using this national orientation to display my feelings on this issue. I am told

that gay people comprise about 10 percent of our population. Using that figure, I am placing the following statement on a random 10 percent of the packages of our most widely distributed product, Oregon Suet Block.

"Cockerum Oregon Insects Corporation recommends that our customers postpone all vacation and conventional travel to Oregon until this state's Republican legislative leaders change their position with regard to the civil rights of gay people."

I am sure that many of you will find this action to be mean-spirited, but, after all, I am a registered Republican. I suggest that any of you who have complaints about my action take your gripes to the House Judiciary Committee Chairman, Randy Miller, or complain to Speaker of the House Larry Campbell.

Forrest Cockerrum
Tillamook

Pushing buttons

Your editorial (ODE, June 27) accusing Attorney General Dave Frohnmayer of not being "bright enough" to understand the appropriateness of exempting peyote use for religious purposes by Native Americans from its general prohibition got matters badly confused. This very limited exemption has now been accomplished in the manner it should be, by a narrowly-focused legislative amendment for the support of which you rightly commend Rep. Jim Edmunson And Gov. Barbara Roberts.

Dave Frohnmayer's earlier involvement with this issue was in an entirely different capacity. As Oregon's Attorney General it was his obligation to defend the constitutionality of the state's law as it then existed. In doing so successfully before the U.S. Supreme Court, Frohnmayer helped place responsibility for reforming the law where it belongs, with the governor and legislators. That responsibility has now been met in a manner most consistent with the premises of democratic self-government.

Your editorial's mistake, an increasingly common one these days, is to assume that an individual's, in this case Frohnmayer's, constitutional view of an issue is necessarily the same as one's view of sensible and just public policy. It is one thing for the Legislature to do what ours has just done by crafting a very limited exemption from an otherwise generally applicable criminal prohibition. It would be quite another thing, one fraught with much potential for divisiveness and polarization, for the Supreme court to start in effect promulgating special privileges for one group or another, based upon religious beliefs or affiliations, in the form of exemptions from laws binding all other citizens.

It is far more fitting that any such special exemptions should be granted by those officials who have imposed general legal obligations and who are elected to represent the majority of citizens who are subject to them. These do not include Supreme Court justices.

Maurice J. Holland
Dean, School of Law

Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. BOX 3159, EUGENE, OREGON 97403

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices at Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

Editor-in-Chief: Christopher Blair

Managing Editor: Pat Malach
Editorial Editor: Pat Malach
Sports Editor: Ashley Conklin
Graphics Editor: Jeff Paslay
Night Editor: Pat Malach

Associate Editors
Student Government/Activities: Daralyn Trappe
Higher Education/Administration: Chris Bounieff
Community: Rob Ward

Advertising: Michael Gray, Manager, Jean Bradley, Kirsten Lucas, Lisa Ng, Andrew Pook, Cathy Foyke, Eryn Scharwatt, Tera Surratt, Sharon Vaz
Classified: Peggy McGinn, Manager

Business: Kathy Carbone, Supervisor, Daralyn Trappe
Production: Sandi Dailier, Advertising Coordinator, Jim Finch, Don Ross, Jennifer Thomas

General Manager: Judy Reed
Production Manager: Michele Ross

Newsroom, Business Office: 346-5511
Display Advertising: 346-3712
Production: 346-4381
Classified Advertising: 346-4343

LETTERS POLICY

The Oregon Daily Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community.

The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.

