

# Thomas nomination a reflection of times

Clarence Thomas, nominee to the U.S. Supreme Court, is one of the Horatio Alger stories conservatives love to talk about. Born poor in rural Georgia, educated at Yale Law School, Thomas is approaching the pinnacle of his career — lifetime membership in the country's most exclusive club.

The furor over his nomination stems from many sources. At 43, he would be one of the youngest justices ever. His judicial career is skimpy, his qualifications sparse. But it is his race and his supposed political views that have garnered the most attention.

Thomas is black. He is also conservative, a near 180-degree flip-flop from the man he is replacing, staunch liberal Thurgood Marshall.

Critics call his nomination a political maneuver. They claim that by nominating a black, Bush has virtually guaranteed confirmation, thus putting yet another conservative on the court. Dissenting senators have to balance possible charges of racism (and subsequent loss of votes) against fair review of the nominee. For them, it's a no-win situation.

Time to face some cold, hard facts. Since 1968, liberals have only been in the White House for four years. During that time, there were no openings on the Supreme Court. Thomas, if confirmed, will be the seventh new justice since Nixon took office.

Despite what our forefathers intended, the Supreme Court is a political creature because the power to nominate and confirm rests in the hands of elected officials. Supreme Court nominees, as a rule, reflect the politics of the President who picks them. With conservatives making all the appointments over the last 23 years, it should not come as an illogical shock that the Supreme Court is now leaning significantly to the right.



Clarence Thomas

Thomas' critics point to his spotty record as chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission during the Reagan administration, his dabbling with the concept of "natural law," and his unwillingness to expound on his political beliefs during the confirmation hearings. His nomination is opposed by both the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Congressional Black Caucus.

But political experts agree Thomas is almost guaranteed confirmation, even if today's Senate Judicial Committee gives him a no recommendation. He is qualified enough to make himself a borderline candidate, and the possibility of a black conservative on the court is enough to sway some of the hedging senators.

He also has managed to avoid getting pinned down on his political beliefs, as Robert Bork was in 1987. Bork's mistakes have been heeded well, and the last two nominees — David Souter and Thomas — have tap danced around questions with the skill of an Arthur Murray disciple.

Add the *Oregon Daily Emerald* to the list of groups who oppose Thomas' nomination. But like all the other critics, it doesn't look like it will make much difference. Thomas is going to be the next Supreme Court justice, and we all have to wait for the ramifications.

It would be nice to live in a world, like Martin Luther King Jr. sought, where Thomas would be judged on his experience and qualifications alone. But the Supreme Court process is politically oriented, and politics is not so open-minded.



"WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT."

## LETTERS

### Not funny

I am personally offended by the ignorance displayed by the *Emerald* in printing the cartoon *Oscar the Freshman* (Sept. 25). This cartoon clearly degrades the greek system.

Neal Skorpen has obviously done little research into the organization he has chosen to condemn. Although the greek system does have its flaws, it provides benefits that contribute to the character and development of all its members. This cartoonist has accused the system of alcohol abuse, female degradation and a course toward mediocrity. These false accusations can only stem from blatant stereotyping.

Not only does the greek system condemn these accusations, it attempts to offer a place of growth in maturity and ideals through brotherhood/sisterhood. The facts illustrate this claim. Over the course of last year, the greek system donated thousands of community service hours. It participated in seminars regarding issues such as rape, alcohol/drug abuse, and discrimination. As well, a greater percentage of greeks graduate than do independents. These facts clearly denote benefits offered by the greek system.

If we are to generalize as Skorpen has done, and independents are non "conformist," open-minded and above Greek "mediocrity," this cartoon is nothing but complete hypocrisy. This is a close-minded, ignorant statement. I feel I am what would be considered a liberal activist with many more concerns regarding the quality of the world in which we live beyond that of just the greek system. However, greek life has

offered me a lot of growth, and I am truly glad to be a part of it. If we are to further ourselves as a University and as a society, we must overcome ignorant, one-sided thinking illustrated by this cartoon.

Russell McGlothlin  
Lambda Chi Alpha

### Conformist?

I'll be the first to admit that maybe I'm not getting the joke, but I think this is one joke that's being beaten into the ground. As a member of a fraternity, I'm insulted by Neal Skorpen's portrayal of greeks in his *Oscar the Freshman* strip (*ODE*, Sept. 25).

Forgive me for indulging, but I would like to say a few things about myself in an effort to enlighten some dim souls who can't resist stereotyping the greek system. If pressed, I would say I lean a bit left; I believe in a strong America, but not at the expense of those we exploit here and abroad. I feel in my heart that abortion is wrong, but I would fight hard to keep my government from making that choice for me. Everyone should have access to housing and medical care.

I don't feel someone's sexual orientation should have any bearing whatsoever on the

treatment they receive from the government or their fellow citizens. The idea of rape or sexual harassment makes me ill. I can't say I'm adverse to making good money, but part of that joy flows from a desire to make sure that some of that money flows to people and organizations that need it more than me. Most of all, I love and cherish this planet we live on.

Yes, I have plenty of faults; I drink too much, I can be vain and materialistic at times, and though I try, I can't always live my life according to God's teachings.

Conformist? We all conform to groups, whether it's a bunch of "hippies" with tie-dyed shirts and sandals, or a bunch of greeks with polo shirts and K-swiss tennies, or anyone in between. In short, I'm a normal person, and I hope I can be recognized and respected as such.

Jamie Bakum  
Kappa Sigma

### Hmm...

If we were to come up with a new form of energy which thrives on unwavering bureaucratic stupidity, the University could save the world! Just a thought.

Gary M. Rosenstein  
TCF

## LETTERS POLICY

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

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

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

