

Voters will be guilty if Duke wins race

What's more frightening, a former grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan in the Louisiana governor's mansion, or the 500,000-plus (so far) people who have voted for him?

Yes, from the state that brought you Huey Long comes the latest in political fiascos.

It didn't seem possible that any political race could come up with two worse candidates than the 1988 presidential election, but Louisiana voters have done just that. On one side is David Duke, a 41-year-old ex-Nazi sympathizer, and on the other is former Gov. Edwin Edwards, who beat a racketeering rap while in office, but still lost the 1988 election to current Gov. Buddy Roemer.

And what happened to Roemer, President Bush's darling who flip-flopped political parties after he was elected? He was an instant lame duck as he finished third in the primary.

There hasn't been a race like this since George Wallace was in politics.

Duke and Edwards will square off in the general election Nov. 16, and no one is predicting a winner. It seems every time Duke is in an election, out-of-state political pundits predict his doom, and the experts are always shocked when he does well.

Three times Duke has run for public office. The first time, he won a seat in the Louisiana Legislature. Last year, he ran for the U.S. Senate and got 45 percent of the vote. Now there's this race, in which Edwards beat him in the primary by a slim 2 percent.

Duke has a solid chance of winning the election. In fact, he has a better chance against Edwards than he would have had against Roemer. For one thing, Edwards is an old-style Louisiana Democrat, wildly different than Roemer's moderate conservatism. Roemer voters are more likely to switch to Duke's camp rather than buck ideology and side with Edwards.

And that's scary.

How can an acknowledged racist, who dismisses his KKK past as "youthful indiscretions," gain so much public support? By knowing his constituency.

The oil bust has left Louisiana in an economic shambles. Unemployment has skyrocketed, and the poor and lower middle classes are disenchanting.

Along comes Duke, who preaches against "big government" welfare and social programs sapping away voters' money. It's no surprise Duke's message is getting a warm reception among blue collar families struggling to ride out the recession.

This isn't a new situation. It's happened before. People who are furious with their government's supposed inactivity are turning to the extremes. A leader who is arguing against the status quo, preaching a new doctrine, coming to power.

Last time it was 1928, and the leader was Hitler.

Duke's success starts a frightening chapter in American politics. It could be another Populist movement, but this time from the right. Instead of the gold standard, the target is social programs.

The Populist movement whimpered out after it barely got started. Let's hope this one does too.

In the end, David Duke isn't to blame; the Louisiana voters are. By turning to his brand of hatred, they make a mockery of their voting rights.

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LETTERS

Old club

Once again this nation faces an image that could tear it apart. The vote to confirm Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court has shown us just how large the division is. For the Senate to confirm someone who will sit on the Supreme Court until death or retirement by a margin of only four votes is a travesty. It also points out one area of the Constitution that needs to be changed.

Our Senate, long viewed as an "old boys club," should be required to have a two-thirds majority when confirming a Supreme Court candidate. That way, we, as citizens, can be assured of getting someone who is of moderate views and has public backing ... strong public backing.

You may be thinking that Thomas had strong public backing, but he did not. I am not saying that Anita Hill or Thomas is correct. What I am saying is Thomas, for good or for evil, became a symbol of the division in American society between men and women.

Most women out there must be asking themselves how many of them must come forward with claims of sexual harassment before a serious investigation is conducted. And yes, the Senate hearings were anything but serious. It looked more like a bickering fit between Orrin Hatch and Joseph Biden. Moreover, I feel a little leery of Teddy Kennedy talking about someone else and their alleged sexual peccadillos.

I think that by requiring a two-thirds majority in Supreme Court confirmations, there will be a better chance of having a united Senate and a united people behind the nominee. I may be wrong, though. The Senate has long been criticized as not representing the people well enough ... at least the minority and female people. I, as a white male, feel overly represented in Congress and the Senate of the United States. But this is an issue for another time.

Scott Shea
Student

Earn it

To Jason Moore who wrote the commentary on health insurance (ODE, Oct. 14) and who believes that health care should "be available on the basis of need ... regardless of ability to pay," I ask, what entitles you to the profits of those who earn their wealth in justifying your demands of equal-opportunity health care?

Should I be expected to pay for the liver transplant of a drunk who lacks the integrity and discipline to pull him/herself out of the gutter, at the expense of my profits from my labor?

You seek to sacrifice the wealthy to the poor with the rationalization of "need," without realizing that it was the wealthy who made modern medicine possible.

They were the ones who could afford years of schooling and spent lifetimes researching and perfecting the technologies that comprise modern medicine — not those who claim that

they have a birthright to these benefits.

Under the U.S. Constitution, the individual is guaranteed "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." This means that you have the right to pursue your own happiness and to earn your own profits and the benefits that come with them.

It does not entitle you to demand from others what you lack and are unwilling to earn. Health care is a commodity that is paid for by those who choose to make money and can afford it. It is not a right of nature by merely being born and by existing.

Michael McGee
Student

Fighting

Lesbians, gays, bisexuals. Dykes, fags, and queers. Perverts, sickos, and degenerates.

We sit next to you in class, we teach your class, we write your textbooks.

We serve your food, we patronize your businesses, we stand with you in line.

We work for you, we employ you, we pay taxes.

We attend the same concerts, we drive the same roads, we breathe the same air.

We are your sons and daughters, your brothers and sisters, your mothers and your fathers.

Can't you see that when you fight against us, you're really fighting against yourselves?

Jodi Mai
Music/International studies

IN RECENT POLLS ON THE THOMAS CONFIRMATION...

39% OF THOSE SURVEYED SAID THEY BELIEVED THE PROCESS WAS FAIR TO THE NOMINEE.

55% SAID THOMAS SHOULD BE CONFIRMED.

AND 98% THOUGHT TED KENNEDY HAD NO BUSINESS QUESTIONING ANYBODY.