

COMMENTARY

'Oregonian' story bowled over Freedom

By Bill Byrne

A major sports article in the Sunday, Nov. 10 *Oregonian* and subsequent Nov. 12 editorial questioned the propriety of the University using a portion of a \$600,000 appearance fee from last December's Freedom Bowl to "bonus" football coaches and senior athletic staff members. The articles also castigated the athletic department for paying travel, hotel and meal expenses for spouses, children and friends of University officials.

The *Oregonian* made it sound as if the University athletic department thought it was given \$600,000 to throw a party. In fact, the NCAA's Post Season Football Committee set \$600,000 as a minimum bowl payout because it's considered to be the "break-even" amount, based on reasonably expected bowl trip expenses for any school, at any bowl.

Of the \$600,000 we received, approximately 85 percent covered necessary expenses for travel, lodging and meal ex-

penses for University football players, coaches, band, rally squad and essential athletic department staff. In addition, the coaches took their families as they were expected to be in Anaheim over the Christmas holiday. Some executive staff members were allowed one family member guest (which could be a significant other). The University administration was represented by a small group. All other staff members were allowed airfare only on the charter.

Following the custom and practice of NCAA Division I schools invited to bowl games, stipends were allocated to the football coaches and a few members of the senior athletic staff. Although the Nov. 12 editorial decried such bonus assignments, saying the nation's colleges don't all pay the same, our exhaustive inquiries have produced but one institution attending a bowl game since 1980 that failed to reward coaches and staff.

The same *Oregonian* editorial suggested the University gave

"expense-paid trips to athletic supporters." Categorically untrue! No program boosters received any benefits from the Freedom Bowl trip, except for the opportunity to buy tickets.

It is important to remember the Freedom Bowl invitation had been made and accepted before Oregon voters passed Measure 5 on Nov. 6, 1990. In the six weeks between the election and the arrival of the Duck football team in Anaheim, Measure 5's impact was impossible to predict. Even today, neither Gov. Barbara Roberts nor Oregon legislators have come to grips with any solutions to Measure 5. The *Oregonian's* articles presumed the athletic department administration should've known what we know now. Hindsight is always 20/20.

I've been asked why the issue of bowl spending would be printed now, less than one week prior to the Friday, Nov. 15 vote by the State Board of Higher Education on whether to provide funding for intercollegiate athletics at the University, Oregon State University,

and Portland State. It was pointed out that the precise information *The Oregonian* printed had been featured in an article in the *Register-Guard* on Dec. 23, 1990, prior to the bowl game.

It has been questioned why *The Oregonian* took two full months from the Sept. 12 date when we supplied final figures by fax to the paper to print its article.

People are wondering, because *The Oregonian* editorially previously opposed state board funding for athletics, if the motivations were politically tinged.

I don't know the answers to these questions about *The Oregonian's* motivations, but I can say, as Director of Athletics, that there was no inappropriate spending of the \$600,000 Freedom Bowl payout. Moreover, if the exact situation again faced me or the athletic department, we would do absolutely nothing different.

Bill Byrne is director of the University athletic department.

LETTERS

Absent

Distinguished Ethnic Studies professor and author Ronald Takaki paid a two-day visit to the University campus last week by invitation of the president and the Office of Affirmative Action. Takaki's visit, overall, was well-received except for the embarrassing absence of the Curriculum Committee scheduled by invitation of the president.

Takaki made clear his disappointment during his outstanding keynote address. The apparent lack of interest and common courtesy exhibited by the Curriculum Committee should be a matter of grave concern. Is such absentee behavior by a key faculty committee indicative of the University's continuing inability to address multiculturalism in the curriculum, except in its present piece-meal and ad-hoc fashion?

It would appear that those faculty members who comprise the Curriculum Committee wasted Professor Takaki's time. Moreover, they added insult to injury by verifying the assertion that a majority of the current "race, gender and non-European" courses are so non-substantive, they are a joke.

If members of the Curriculum Committee, who were given adequate lead time by the president to visit with Professor Takaki felt they had better things to do, then what does that say about Ethnic Studies at the University? I invite the Curriculum Committee to respond.

Jon Motohiro
Asian American/Pacific
Islander Student Union

Misdemeanors

I think Brian Hoop is right (*ODE*, Nov. 13). I don't see what a misdemeanor conviction has to do with an individual's fitness for office.

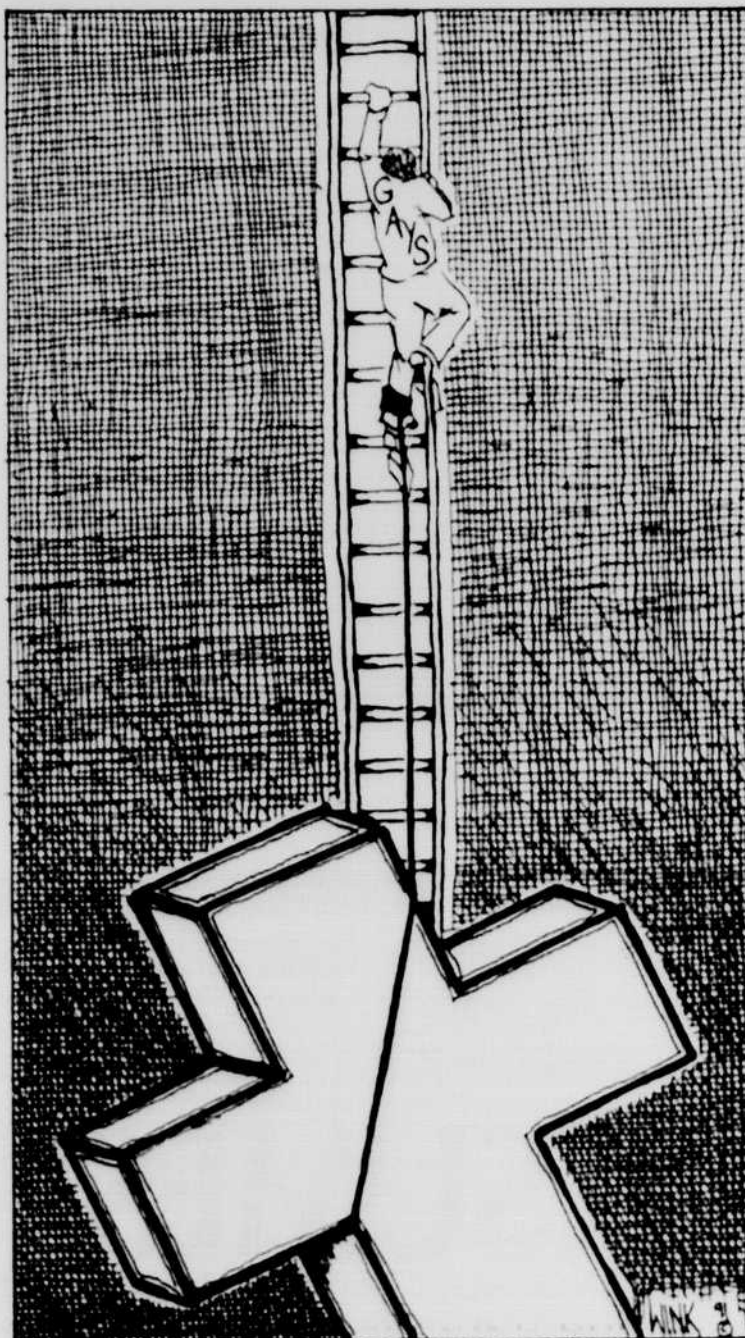
If a misdemeanor conviction disqualifies Jo Sonja Watson from holding the office of ASUO vice president, then I suppose she's also disqualified from holding any position of

responsibility anywhere. People with misdemeanor convictions may as well be executed since we can't ever be trusted again.

Perhaps the self-righteous creeps who want to drag Watson from office would like to try to get me kicked out of my job as a part-time LCC science instructor. I have two misdemeanor convictions (trespassing, Johnson Hall, April 1970;

possession of marijuana, Alberta, Canada, 1973). I'm sure my failure to pay traffic fines on two occasions, the first for running a red light on a bicycle, the second for hitchhiking, and subsequent fines (paid) for driving without a license, running a red light and running a stop sign (in a school van the last instance) will clinch the case against me.

Obviously, I'm unfit to teach



geology to adults. When will the stone throwers do something about this?

One more thing: These offenses are a matter of public record. What about the crimes I got away with because I "look innocent" (white)?

Ann Tattersall
Graduate student

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