

## Reno breaks barrier, but is she qualified?

If all goes well, sometime within the next week this country will have its first female U.S. attorney general.

Miami prosecutor Janet Reno, who is 54 and has never hired an illegal alien, is expected to meet little opposition during her confirmation hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

However, our relief at finally having a nominee and our pleasure at seeing women break through yet another barrier does not set aside some nagging questions concerning this tortuous selection process.

One such concern is Reno's qualifications. She has been a state prosecutor in Miami since 1977 and has been a strong advocate for the environment and children, causes she said will remain among her priorities as attorney general.

However, her office in Miami has gained the unfavorable reputation of blowing big cases. Having taken office during one of the country's biggest increases in crime, her office had several cases thrown out because of technicalities, and conviction rates dropped sharply.

**Until she proves otherwise, Reno deserves our support.**

Reno's nomination was praised by Patricia Ireland, president of the National Organization for Women, who praised her for having "managed to negotiate that political minefield without setting off explosions," referring to Miami's political and racial polarization.

Unfortunately, that's not the case. Reno's office lost a 1980 case in which four Miami police officers were accused of beating a black man to death at a traffic stop. The officers were acquitted by an all-white Tampa jury, and three days of rioting in downtown Miami ensued.

Reno's office was also forced to turn over a police corruption case to federal authorities after her office became unable to deal with the number of pre-trial motions filed by the defense.

On the plus side, Reno has been a tireless advocate for children's rights and juvenile legal reform. She has also pledged to make violent crime, particularly when it concerns children, her primary target as attorney general.

Certainly, Reno is not the most qualified candidate for the job. If she were, she would have been chosen first rather than third. And though we applaud the selection of a woman as the nation's highest law enforcement official, we must question whether she got the nod because of her qualifications, or simply because she was a woman.

When George Bush nominated Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court, he said, "The fact that he is black — a minority — has nothing to do with this. He is the best person for this position." Sure.

The same degree of skepticism should be applied to Clinton's selection of Reno. However, it should be remembered that Robert Kennedy had virtually no experience when his brother John appointed him, and he did a decent job. And until she proves otherwise, Reno deserves our support.



## LETTERS

### Critical choice

The 1993 Women's Law Forum Conference featured a panel titled "Women and Religion." Catholic, Protestant and Jewish religions were all represented. Absent was Islamic representation. The one billion Muslims in the world, six million of which live in the United States, were ignored.

This isn't surprising on a campus whose administration and faculty suffer from a vacuity of awareness of Islam and its import in international relations.

Also sorely missing in a November 1992 forum on the life and times of Malcolm X was an expert on Islam, the religion that transformed the life of a man named Little to a man named X.

The collective consciousness on this campus embarrassed itself last year during a weeklong conference on racism. Many different groups were included in the program, although Muslims were not. Time and space were hastily provided without publicity when I brought the omission to the attention of the conference organizer.

These omissions are not only sinful, but criminal, because the United States is so heavily involved in the Middle East. Students should ask why the system wants to keep them ignorant of the reality of Islam and the Middle East. It is always easier to get violent with people you don't know.

Included or not in conferences or the curriculum, the Muslim struggle continues uninterrupted and undeterred. The faculty and administration at the University can either catch up or stay put. That is their choice. The choice, however, for students is critical. Their future may include wars they have to fight.

**M. Reza Behnam  
Eugene**

### Do research

I would like to respond to Jason Porter's letter (ODE, Feb. 8), "Strike three." It seems as if Porter had a little trouble read-

ing my letter, "Shed myths" (ODE, Feb. 2).

Porter puts *Emerald* sports editor Dave Charbonneau and me in the same category, as if we shared a common ground. This is not true. Our views on the Portland Trail Blazer situation couldn't possibly be more different. I support the young girls involved; Charbonneau does not (ODE, Feb. 2).

Porter makes a random statement saying "thousands of innocent people go to jail each year," implying women lie about rape and sexual abuse. If Porter was not watching so many Blazer games on television and was more aware, he would know rape is the most underreported crime in the nation.

One in every three women has been a victim of rape, and only a very few of these women ever tell anyone. This is because 80 percent of all rape victims know their attacker (friends, dates, etc.). Knowing the perpetrator only adds to the pressure to keep victims quiet.

I would like to suggest to Porter that he reread my letter and then do a little research on rape.

**Rondine Niki Rauch  
Undeclared**

### Athletic support

I don't think students at this university realize how fortunate and lucky they are to have an athletic program that operates the way the University does, especially when it comes to basketball games. To see the games, all students have to do is go to Mac Court, show our ID and get a ticket.

Not many schools in the nation make it that easy to see a basketball game. At schools such as Kansas, students camp out for days just so they can buy tickets for individual games.

There is no reason why a Division I school such as ours should not be selling out all the basketball games, especially since "The Pit" only seats about 9,500 people. That's probably one of the smaller Division I basketball arenas in the country.

Some might argue that they

don't want to go see a team that has only won seven games. But if the support had been better all throughout the season, and if the fans really did strike fear into the hearts of opposing teams, maybe we would have won more games.

New head coach Jerry Green, the rest of the coaches and all the players are really working their butts off out there, and it seems to me that students should really show them a heck of a lot more support than we are.

**Rome Poracsky  
Geography**

### Bad timing

After picking up the spring class schedule, I was excited to see the Folklore and Ethnic Studies department has not one, but two classes relating directly to Jewish studies: Jewish Mysticism and Blacks and Jewish American Experience. Imagine my dismay when I found that both classes were scheduled for exactly the same time.

Perhaps the Folklore and Ethnic Studies Department has not noticed there are not very many Jews on this campus. Classes relating to Jewish culture are equally scarce. I find it hard to believe that when the opportunity presents itself, I will not be able to take one of these classes because I have to make a choice between the only two Jewish classes offered all year.

In addition, what about the Jewish student who has a meeting or office hours during these Thursday classes? Does this mean the student cannot take any Jewish studies classes until next spring simply because he or she had free time every day except Thursdays from 3:30 to 6 p.m.?

I am sure this is coming off as one more letter from an individual with a gripe about their own personal oppression, and I know there are more pressing concerns about equality and justice. But I am concerned because I, as well as others, will have to miss out on one or both of the only two classes offered for Jewish students all year.

**Linda Maizels  
University Housing**

## Oregon Daily Emerald

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