Real strength created from discussing real issues, fighting real battles

COMMENTARY

Edwina Welch

Self-reflection can be a dangerous thing (*ODE*, Feb. 7). I wonder, Keith, if your intention was to make the University a more hospitable campus for women or to just repeat the same "intellectual raping" of which you accuse the *Commentator*.

In our 45-minute interview, did you not hear any of my comments made about pro-active ways we could address the *Commentator* piece? Instead you took (as the *Commentator* does on occasion) the stance that because I did not agree with your ideas, this somehow made me "spineless." You create the very oppressive atmosphere you say you want to fight.

How ironic that you should choose to call names and divert attention away from the real issues. Issues such as the fact that we live in a world where men think it's OK to write the Cornell list in the first place, a world where a woman is raped every six minutes, a world where a woman is safer on the street than in her home. Taking a pro-active stance on "Real Issues" is not spineless; it's prudent.

As a woman and an African-American, I have spent my life being called names. But I am on to your game.

Your tactic is to engage in a rhetoric that gives you strength over me by the very fact that I respond to your comments. This tactic makes me angry, and I have better uses for my time. How sad that you stoop to a tactic that is so clear to someone who has been oppressed, but seems to escape your notice.

This is how dominant-male culture asserts itself.

My real strength is knowing how to not let the smoke and mirrors divert the Women's Center and myself from our real work, including helping women navigate the bureaucracy of the University, helping women gain knowledge and voice around sexist issues and educating the campus and community on contributions made by women.

The Cornell List is definitely something to get angry about. Its blatant disregard for women is evident. The Women's Center took its action by e-mailing the source and asking the administration of Cornell to take this very seriously and to take action.

But today, I am more angry with the time I had to spend writing this opinion. I caution you, Keith, not on your motivation, but on your tactics. Will we get everyone up in arms only to find that much of what was written in the Jan. 19 *Commentator* is protected under free speech?

Yes, the *Commentator* had its funding pulled in the past, but it was reinstated the next day. We may not like the opinion of our papers, but we have to protect their right to publish.

As a journalist I thought you would know this. Get the facts.

Let's use our energy and voice to bring up the issues, not just respond to them. We need to challenge the political rhetoric that would silence women's voices in a variety of ways. It's an election year; ask yourself what you can do to be helpful.

I fear that if you continue with your tone and tactics, one day you may find yourself on the wrong side of the famous quote by Malcolm X: "If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem."

Edwina Welch is the director of the ASUO Women's Center.

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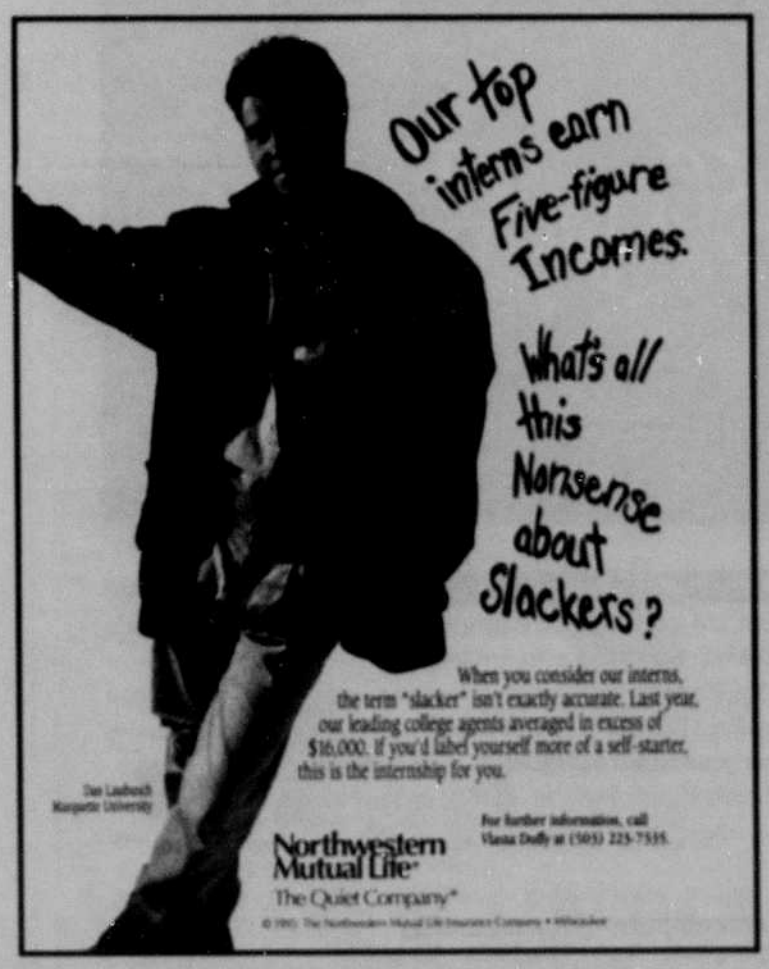

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