

Thoughts of Nike takeover unwarranted

OUR OPINION: Phil Knight's \$1 million presidential endowment is a gift, not a business maneuver

When Nike CEO Phil Knight gave \$25 million to the University last spring, the community reaction was generally positive. The largest college in the state was receiving one of the largest public donations ever in Pacific Northwest history. Why not be happy?

But when Knight specifically allocated \$1 million of his gift to the University President's salary, the public cried foul. How could the leader of one of the nation's most influential corporations directly pay part of the salary of one of the state's most important public figures?

President Frohnmayer has great power over University policy and operations, people said. Therefore, Phil Knight will now have indirect (or maybe direct) control over the University — hence "Nike University."

Nike University? This claim is unrealistic and simply the product of an underlying paranoia over anything "big." Nike is quite a large company. Its products are sold all over the world. So when its CEO donates \$1 million to Frohnmayer's salary, people get scared. And an initial fear is justified. But that's where it should stop.

Knight said he donated the money to entice Frohnmayer to stay in his position as president. Frohnmayer, of course, is a popular man, even generating talk of a possible U.S. Senate or House run. Knight no doubt hopes the added salary will make Eugene seem a bit more attractive than Washington.

This attempt at influence by donation is a bit questionable, but really harmless in itself. Knight just wants Frohnmayer to stay, not start a special Nike major in the business school.

And Frohnmayer, no matter what, looks bad in the situation. He wants to make money for the University, even make the president position more competitive. But the fact is, he's accepting money for himself. This doesn't look good on the surface. And the public recognized it.

But after these initial fears are recognized, one should see that the \$25 million donation and the few restrictions set on that money will only be helpful to the University.

The discrepancy between Knight the citizen and Knight the CEO needs to be established. He is a private citizen, a very rich one. He made the decision, for whatever reason, to give a lot of money to the University. He has not asked for any say in University internal affairs, and there's no sign he will do so. What are we so afraid of?

The initial fears, as outlined earlier, are justified. But ultimately, the donation will only help



the University. Blind paranoia over corporations is unnecessary and hurtful to everyone involved.

We seriously doubt there will ever be any late night talks between Frohnmayer and Knight, talking over key University policy. We doubt Knight will ever demand "Just do it" signs be erected all over campus.

We should be careful. Let's not forget that Nike is a strong presence on this campus, and the donation could strengthen this. And its overseas labor practices are under intense

scrutiny. But these doubts over the corporation don't translate into valid reasons to oppose Knight's individual gift, as long as one wants the University to succeed.

If Knight shows any indication he wants to "control" the University, we'll call him on it. But until then, his gift can only make the University better.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board.

Overheard

"If this is a surprise to you, it's also a surprise to me. It doesn't bother me that I'm not the first choice. I'm the best choice."

Jerry Green, announcing his new position as head coach of the University of Tennessee basketball program

"I remember thinking 'There's 300 million people out there and one of them is right for me' — but you don't know if you'll ever meet them or how you'll do it."

Paul McCartney, describing the inspiration for his new single "Young Boy"

"I wish Jackie Robinson was alive today because I think that 25 years from now, American blacks won't be playing baseball..."

John Young, former professional baseball player and scout, on the alienation of blacks in baseball today

"These strawberries from California are absolutely safe to eat."

U.S. Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman's reaction to the spread of Hepatitis A caused by contaminated strawberries from Mexico

"I have no martyr complex, but I also don't believe in giving the Iranians the pleasure of disrupting my everyday life."

Author Salman Rushdie on the \$2 million bounty Iranian fundamentalists have on his head

LETTERS

Who we are

Many people believe that being gay consists of nothing more than a specific act or a set of behaviors. Such a view is inaccurate and consigns the person who is homosexual to the status of a morally corrupt or mentally ill individual. This is the view promulgated by anti-gay persons and political groups.

The truth is that being gay is an intimate, integrated aspect of one's identity that, like heterosexuality, is not tied to a specific behavior at all. This idea is perhaps best understood when you consider the fact that gay males and lesbians, prior to any kind of sexual activity, identify themselves as virgins.

The point is that there is a distinc-

tion between what people do and who they are. And for gay males and lesbians, like heterosexual persons, who we are is much more important and central to our humanity. For example, being gay is the social equivalent of having an alternate race, religion or national origin.

Passing judgment on people based on who they are is prejudice and passing judgment on people because they are gay is the moral equivalent of racism.

Although there are people who cannot see gay males and lesbians for who they are, there are increasing numbers of people who are realizing that same-sex attraction is a consistent, identifying feature of human personality that cannot be denied.

Don Paulsen
 North Sioux City, SD

Campaign apology

As candidates for ASUO Executive, we realize the importance of taking responsibility for our actions. That is why we would like to apologize for overlooking the fact that the first set of posters we used were printed on non-recyclable material. We would like to assure everybody that all campaign materials will be printed on recyclable materials.

We would also like to thank the people who brought this matter to our attention and would welcome any further comments, suggestions or concerns. We can be reached at asha@oregon.uoregon.edu or brandon@oregon.uoregon.edu.

Brandon Lee Smith
Asha Mary John
 ASUO Candidates

OCA repeat

So, the OCA is at it again. It is putting a measure on the ballot in November called the Family Act, but it's slipping things other than marriage into this bill, as it has in the past. Yet again, the measure includes job discrimination, censorship in public libraries and misinformation.

You're voting for more than just marriage on this one. Before you sign the OCA's petition or vote yes on the measure, think of that. Consider the repercussions of legalizing

discrimination. Regardless of how you feel about gays or lesbians, do you really want to be held responsible for condemning a large portion of the population to second-class citizenship?

Think about this: Who's next? If the OCA can do it to gay people, who's next on the list for legal prejudice? Almost every minority in this country was at one time the target of legal prejudice. Will we return to a time when people are judged by their race or religion? These groups have almost broken free. If you think that you're immune to being the target of legal prejudice, and you support the OCA, think again. You may be next.

Jennifer Peterson
 Chemistry