



Bryan Dixon Emerald

Grace under fire



Whit
Sheppard

We're going to give the "how to live a better life" spiel the week off and consider matters closer to home. Specifically, I think it's high time someone gave University President Dave Frohnmayer some well-earned kudos. Let's face it: the guy's had a really tough school year by any reasonable standards.

From the sudden heart arrhythmia he suffered in late October while in Maryland for a National Institutes of Health conference to negotiating with a committed group of student labor rights protesters to handling the fallout from supporting the University's decision to join the Worker Rights Consortium, Frohnmayer has faced Job-like challenges and come through them all. If it's true that the finest steel only emerges from the hottest fire, Frohnmayer must be like one of those shiny sabers on those Marine Corps commercials you see at halftime of Saturday afternoon football games.

Can you imagine being close enough to look death in the eye, enjoying a brief convalescence, and returning within a couple of weeks to reassume primary responsibility for a 17,000-student university with an annual operating bud-

get of more than \$300 million?
A little bit of history here: Frohnmayer attended Harvard at the same time my mom attended nearby Wellesley, Hillary Rodham Clinton's alma mater. Last April, home for the weekend, I pulled out a dusty old Harvard annual, circa 1962, and just for fun flipped through the pages and descriptions of the senior class. Eventually I came to a picture of an earnest-looking guy with slicked-back hair as per the fashion of the times. Next to the portrait was a caption. It read "Dweeb" in faded blue ink. I couldn't believe that the president of the school I'd chosen over an old, established East Coast university had been considered a dweeb by my mom and her coterie of giggly college friends. I chuckled at the irony and told no one of my discovery, didn't even ask my mom about it.

Funny that a year later, I can tell you that even though I have not met Frohnmayer, I respect and admire him. I like what he stands for. When he formally assumed the University presidency in October 1996, he had this to say: "We do not need a different university. But we must constantly dedicate ourselves to the development of a better one:

- A university that accepts no substitute for quality, and no excuse for mediocrity.
- A university that challenges itself every day to become better.
- A university that recognizes and realizes its essential and overriding goal of *transforming lives through knowledge.*"

Personally, I'm with him on all three counts. I relocated to the sunny Pacific Northwest because I felt that I had a better chance here of transforming my life and others' than at Johns

Hopkins. While the experience has been your typical academic up-and-down, I'm glad to know that I'm studying at a university where the chief executive, the person whose attitudes and actions filter down to 22,000 other community members, sets the kind of tone that Frohnmayer does.

By supporting the wishes of students and the University Senate to join the WRC, he supported a politically-correct decision with significant short-term political and personal costs. But he did the right thing, and while I wish that were not such a novel approach, it is in the corporate age, where money talks and values are something you talk about over coffee with your beatnik pals at Espresso Roma. By refusing to pander to Nike CEO Phil Knight and Nike, Frohnmayer may have cost the university short-term financial largesse — which always comes at a price — and a spruced-up stadium for our Saturday gladiators, but much more importantly, he followed his conscience and held firm when the backlash ensued.

The University will benefit in the long run from his brave and correct short-term act to an extent that increased attendance and revenues from the expansion of Autzen Stadium never would have provided. If that's what dweebs grow up to do, then I say we all wear a beanie once in a while and let the inner geek in all of us step out and strut a little bit. Here's wishing you a restful summer and a less turbulent 2000-2001 school year, Frohnmayer. You certainly have earned the right.

Whit Sheppard is a columnist for the Oregon Daily Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald. He can be reached via e-mail at whitneys@darkwing.uoregon.edu.

Letters to the editor

Olsen best choice

Tracy Olsen is clearly the best choice to represent the downtown district of Eugene. Olsen has already made a great impression on many of the voters in Ward 3. Not only has he gone door-to-door to introduce himself to the people in his ward, but he has taken the time to speak and listen to numerous neighborhood groups, community organizations and city associations. Olsen's great attitude, wisdom and vision for our city always

shine through.

Olsen is a Eugene native who lives and works in downtown Eugene. He's a responsible small business owner who knows what it's like to balance a budget and employ numerous people. His education in real estate finance from the University will be very useful in city planning decisions. And his care for the livability of the core of our city, as well as youth programs, will insure that we move in the right direction and at the right pace.

Olsen's style is exactly what the City Council needs, as evidenced

by The Register-Guard's endorsement of Olsen in this race.

I urge all voters in Ward 3 to elect Olsen to the Eugene City Council. He's the best choice!

Dave Cary
Eugene resident

Vote progressive

The makeup of the City Council in Eugene could shift significantly, depending on who is elected, which has not escaped community progressives, conservatives or newspaper editors. The campaigns for Wards 2 and 3 pit two experienced progressives and environmental groups, such as the

Sierra Club and the Oregon League of Conservation Voters, against the businessmen, who are endorsed by the developers lobby.

Here are some facts about Mike Sherlock and Tracy Olsen. Neither one has a fraction of the experience with city of Eugene government that the progressives have. Neither one of them has a record on which voters can assess their positions on issues of critical importance to the city. Sherlock has been a lobbyist at the state legislature on behalf of a gasoline dealers association. County voting records show that Olsen has not voted in

the last two elections.

I want elected representatives who have a record of serving the city, rather than of taking services from the city. I want councilors who will not be presumed by the business community and the timber interests, which funded their campaigns, to grant tax breaks to businesses which force more cuts in city recreation and social services. All the candidates running for these two wards may be nice, but only some are deserving of election.

Howard Bonnett
biology