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# COMMENTARY

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Tuesday, January 22, 2002

## Editorial

### Mac Court celebration overlooks UO women

On Jan. 15, rabid basketball fans packed McArthur Court to celebrate 75 years of magic in the Pit, the oldest court in the Pacific-10 Conference. Nearly 50 former Duck basketball legends reunited to honor the building's birthday. The evening would have been a perfect tribute, save the complete lack of a bevy of former female players from the lineup of Oregon basketball luminaries.

The night was meant to celebrate the magic of Mac Court and honor those players who helped make it famous. All of the honorees were well-deserving of recognition and are, indeed, Pit heroes. But it's unfair to celebrate the magic of a building without including all of the players who made it legendary.

Let's not forget that through the years, the 29-year-old women's basketball program has been vastly more successful than the men's. The men's team is on a roll right now, breaking into the AP top 25 poll, but the lady Ducks — especially under former head coach Jody Runge — have been a consistently winning team. In Runge's eight years at Oregon, she amassed the highest winning percentage in the University's athletic history. The women's basketball program has consistently proven its worth in the athletics program and should have been recognized as part of Mac Court's rich history.

Next year, Mac Court will celebrate three decades of Oregon women's basketball, and some of the honorees should include all-time leading scorer Alison Lang, current head coach and all-time leading rebounder Bev Smith, former players Angelina Wolvert and Brienne Meharry, Debbie Adams, Stefanie Kasperki, Julie Cushing, Staci Wallenborn, Gabi Neuman, and Runge, the controversial coach who did much to further Oregon's reputation as a contender.

### Letters to the Editor and Guest Commentaries Policy

Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged. Letters are limited to 250 words and guest commentaries to 550 words. Please include contact information. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style.

**E**nron: v. (en'ron). To administer a reversal of fortune, especially through deceit or trickery, and administered for benefit at the expense of another, to take advantage of another, to cheat. See also: screw (4)  
 — Webster's Dictionary, 2050.

It's a story that seems like a throwback to the "greed is good" '80s. The Houston-based energy re-seller Enron Corp. was once a giant in its field. In August 2000, investors briskly traded shares of the company at a respectable \$90 each, and it looked like the sky was the limit for the firm. But after summer 2001, in which the firm possibly made a killing off the California energy crisis by manipulating energy re-sales to the state for an immense profit, the company went into a nosedive.



Pat  
 Payne  
 Columnist

In December, the ride was over for Ken Lay, Enron chief executive officer. The company retreated behind Chapter 11 after the announcement that Enron used shady accounting to make its fiscal reports look much, much, much better (around \$586 million) than they actually were, setting a record for the largest bankruptcy filing in history.

But that, as they say, is not all, folks. It is becoming more and more apparent that before scuttling the company, many of the top executives sensed the shifting winds and dumped onto the New York Stock Exchange billions of dollars worth of Enron stock that they held in options. By the time of its bankruptcy, the once robust \$90 stock had become worth less than a dollar. Because of this, entire retirements have been made worthless for the employees who invested in Enron-provided 401(k) plans — in effect buying Enron stock that would have become million-dollar nest eggs after leaving the company. It was through this insider trading that top executives, like CEO Lay, made off with astronomical sums like \$217 million.

Insider trading, huh? Thought that went out with Ivan Boesky. It's definitely time for the Securities and Exchange Commission — and others — to take a close look at these last-minute trades that netted the top Enron staff around a billion dollars. It's obvious that the executives knew the company was going to collapse and tried to liquidate while the stock price was high. It's illegal to act on a stock because of inside information. If they can prove that Lay or any of his cronies profited due to insider trading, it would not be too extreme to relieve them of their billion-dollar burden.

By the by, who's going to look into the do-



Steve Baggs Emerald

nations to certain politicians' campaign accounts mere days before Enron's collapse? Especially when these contributions rather conveniently included 91 percent (51 of 56) of the members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee; who would be in charge of investigating Enron? Now a majority of this committee has had to excuse themselves from the investigation.

It seems that everyone was asleep too long at the switch. For instance, Billy Tauzin, R-La., now one of the most dogged on the heels of Enron, was also one of the biggest recipients of donations from Enron and its auditor, Arthur Andersen. Looking back to

previous years, we can see how this relationship worked. Tauzin, the Energy and Commerce Committee's chairman, took \$47,000 from the company, and in return, helped block regulations that may have prevented accounting companies from the kind of shady business that Arthur Andersen displayed in its work with Enron.

It also helps when influential senators' wives are on the board of directors, as was the wife of Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas, Wendy. Guess who else isn't investigating?

E-mail columnist Pat Payne at patpayne@dailyemerald.com. His opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald.

### Poll Results:

Every week, the Emerald prints the results of our online poll and the poll question for next week. The poll can be accessed from the main page of our Web site, [www.dailyemerald.com](http://www.dailyemerald.com). We encourage you to send us feedback about the poll questions and results.

**Last week's poll question:** Where should the city of Eugene put the Sprint PCS tower?

**Results:** 82 total votes  
 Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) — 20.7 percent, or 17 votes  
 On top of McArthur Court — 34.1 percent, or 28 votes  
 15th Avenue and Villard Street — 22.0 percent, or 18 votes

Don't care — 14.6 percent, or 12 votes

Don't know — 8.5 percent, or 7 votes

Apparently the campus is still divided on this issue. The bottom line is the tower needs to be placed somewhere to service frustrated cell phone users and frustrated neighborhoods. A resolution is needed immediately.

**This week's poll question:** Whom would you nominate to be an honorary Olympic torch bearer?

**The choices:**

University President Dave Frohnmayer  
 Jeffrey Grayson  
 Eugene Mayor Jim Torrey  
 Frog  
 PFC Chairwoman Mary Elizabeth Madden  
 Don't care

### Letter to the editor

#### Yes, Oui, Ja; languages deserve study

I am deeply disappointed in the Emerald Editorial Board. The editorial on the University's language requirement is another stellar example of Americans' shortsightedness and ethnocentrism ("No, Non, Nein; In any tongue, 'no' to language requirement," ODE, 01/17).

The point of studying other languages is to engage other cultures and to grow from that experience as a person, not to be able to run a board meeting in another language. Practical world experience is not always the value of education. Look beyond your desires for a degree and a paycheck, and think about your possibilities of growth as a person.

The rest of the world studies our language, and we have a reputation as being rude and insensitive to other cultures. Any idea where this reputation might come from?

Joseph Snider  
 graduate student  
 architecture, historic preservation