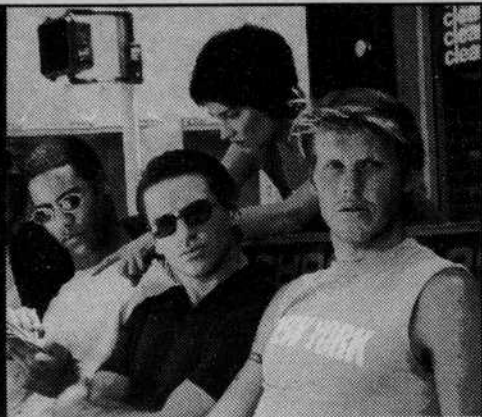


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Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. Box 3159, Eugene OR 97403

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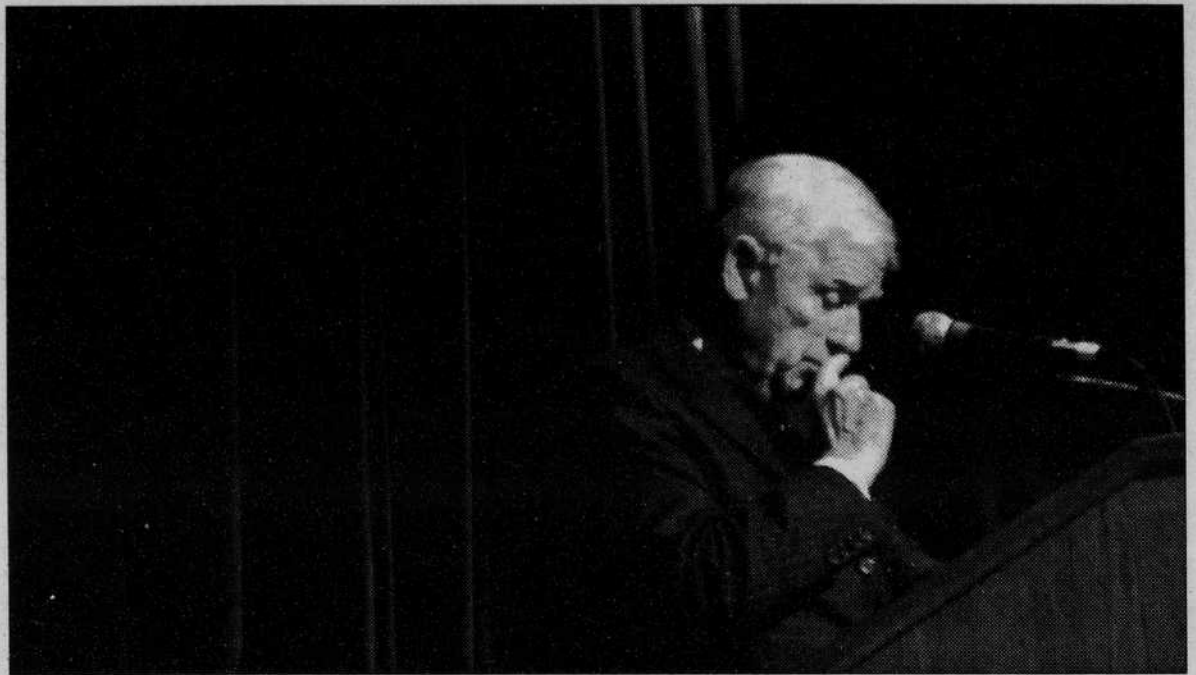
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Thomas Patterson Emerald

Former Oregon Sen. and Gov. Mark Hatfield pauses while recounting how, as governor, he refused to commute the sentence of a death row prisoner. The resulting anguish, he says, helped turn him against the death penalty.

Conference

continued from page 1

Prejean, who has witnessed four executions in Louisiana since Sonnier's, talked about her experiences with death row inmates and the impact of those experiences on her work. She said she does not want to persuade people to oppose the death penalty but wants to present people with both sides of the issue.

"I want to bring people to both sides of the issue and make people reflect," Prejean said. "Because I was a witness, I should tell people my story. ... People need to hear it."

2001-02 Wayne Morse Chair Professor Charles Ogletree Jr., who hosted the conference, said the event was intended to look at both sides of the death penalty debate in a dispassionate way. But there were some who thought death penalty supporters were underrepresented at the conference.

"My concern is whether this is a rally or a discussion," said Clatsop County district attorney Josh Marquis. "If it's a discussion, there should not be a 8-1 or 9-1 ratio."

Marquis said as the only person at the conference who knew Sen. Wayne Morse personally, he was concerned that there wasn't more debate.

"I think he would've been really pleased with the conference, but disappointed by the lack of debate," Marquis said of the late Morse, whom he described as an "incredible man" and a "contrarian" who "sacrificed his political career by opposing the Vietnam War."

Marquis also took issue with Ryan's inclusion as a keynote speaker. He referred to Ryan as a "fraud" who used the death penalty debate to save himself politically.

Opposition to the format of the conference came to a head Friday afternoon when Crime Victims United, a Portland area victims' rights group, held a press conference outside the EMU. Last week CVU blasted the conference in a press release, saying the number of death penalty opponents giving keynote addresses made true debate impossible.

At the press conference, CVU president Steve Doell said the



Thomas Patterson Emerald

Charles Ogletree Jr., Wayne Morse Chair of Law and Politics, host of the conference and staunch death penalty opponent, listens to proponent Robert Blecker's address.

conference was nothing more than a "political pep rally" put on by death penalty opponents and accused event organizers of "academic fascism."

"I want to bring people to both sides of the issue and make people reflect.

Because I was a witness, I should tell people my story.

... People need to hear it."

Sister Helen Prejean
author, 'Dead Man Walking'

Doell repeated the press release's call for Oregon Attorney General Hardy Myers to investigate whether organizers had violated Oregon law by using public funds to promote a political cause.

Doell, whose daughter was killed in 1992 by an underage drunk driver and who characterized himself as the father of a murder victim, said a vast majority of Oregonians support the current system. He brushed aside talk of reform and

said that, if anything, the death penalty needs to be carried out in "a quicker, more efficient manner."

"People refer to murderers and their families as victims," Doell said. Pointing to several local family members of murder victims who had accompanied him, he declared "these are the real victims."

But Ogletree disagreed that the conference was biased and called the assertion "shameful." He accused Doell and Marquis of "drive-by slander."

"What I found tragic was the character assassination of Governor Ryan," Ogletree said. "Governor Ryan is a tough Republican who believes in the death penalty. But he wants to get it right."

Ogletree, whose sister, brother-in-law and uncle were victims of murder, also dismissed the assertion that death penalty opponents were somehow belittling the rights and emotions of victims' families.

"There are few people in the audience who have not been victims," he said. "Victimization is widespread."

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