

LAW & JUSTICE

Thomas Says Yale Degree Worth 15 Cents

Classmates say he needs to get over grudge

(AP)—U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas has a 15-cent price tag stuck to his Yale law degree, blaming the school's affirmative action policies in the 1970s for his difficulty finding a job after he graduated.

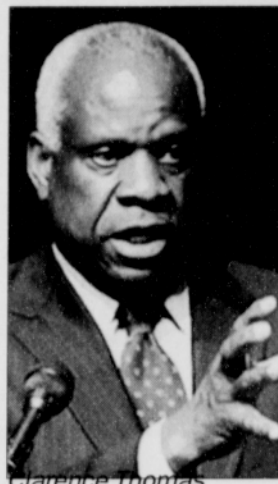
Some of his black classmates say Thomas needs to get over his grudge because Yale opened the door to extraordinary opportunities.

Thomas' new autobiography, "My Grandfather's Son," shows how the second black justice on the Supreme Court came to oppose affirmative action after his law school experience. He was one of about 10 blacks in a class of 160 who had arrived at Yale after the unrest of the 1960s, which culminated in a Black Panther Party trial in New Haven that nearly caused a large-scale riot.

The conservative justice says he initially considered his admission to Yale a dream, but soon felt he was there because of his race. He says he loaded up on tough courses to prove he was not inferior to his white classmates but considers the effort futile. He says he was repeatedly turned down in job interviews at law firms after his 1974 graduation.

"I learned the hard way that a law degree from Yale meant one thing for white graduates and another for blacks, no matter how much any one denied it," Thomas writes. "I'd graduated from one of America's top law schools, but racial preference had robbed my achievement of its true value."

Thomas says he stores his Yale Law degree in his basement with a 15-cent sticker from a cigar package



Clarence Thomas

on the frame.

His view isn't shared by black classmate William Coleman III.

"I can only say my degree from Yale Law School has been a great boon," said Coleman, now an attorney in Philadelphia. "Had he not gone to a school like Yale, he would not be sitting on the Supreme Court."

Thomas said he began interviewing with law firms at the beginning of his third year of law school.

"Many asked pointed questions unsobly suggesting that they doubted I was as smart as my grades indicated," he wrote. "Now I knew what a law degree from Yale was worth when it bore the taint of racial preference."

He said it was months before he got an offer, from then-Missouri Attorney General John Danforth.

Steven Duke, a white Yale law professor who taught when Thomas attended Yale, said Thomas is right to say that the significance of someone's degree could be called into question if the person was admitted to an institution on a preferential basis. However, he said that could be overcome by strong performance, noting that two Yale graduates — Danforth and President Bush — put Thomas into top jobs.

"I find it difficult to believe he actually regrets the choice he made," Duke said. "It seems to me he did pretty well."

Thomas has declined to have his portrait hung at Yale Law School along with other graduates who became U.S. Supreme Court justices. An earlier book, "Supreme Discomfort," by Washington Post reporters Kevin Merida and Michael Fletcher, portrays Thomas as still upset some Yale professors opposed his confirmation during hearings marked by Anita Hill's allegations that Thomas sexually harassed her.

Mural Forefronts Women's Activism

continued from Metro

Clara Peoples and Sandra Ford for example, advanced their cause through quite different means, respectively by entrepreneurship, event coordination and health activism.

Organizing the project was a learning experience for Corbo as well. Of the 26, the only one she was familiar with before last year was Anne Berblinger, who has been

crucial in linking Oregon's need for both economic and environmental reform.

Corbo says the goal was to pick women not for their fame, but rather for their ability to "inspire people to do good things."

Even after Corbo experienced getting a \$15,000 mural grant from the Regional Arts and Culture Council for the second year in a row, the "Making History" mural presented a different set of challenges from

the one completed last year at the Community Cycling Center on Alberta Street.

Corbo has organized this latest project with a vast spectrum of hired staff and community volunteers, and she now feels ready to start her own business for property owners wanting custom murals.

"The volunteer effort has really run the gamut on this one," she says. "We had this one guy who had never painted before in his

life."

Appreciating the potential contributions of everyone in the community, Corbo sees the potential for a tipping point after the positive experience of working with warehouse owner Stan Herman, who got to nominate local motorcycle enthusiast Joy Farmer.

"The culture of public art is getting more accessible, but there can be more done in every part of the city," Corbo says.

Local Activist Honored

continued from Metro

"Claire is a thoughtful, intelligent and progressive woman of strong character," said Rubio. "She works tirelessly and passionately to raise awareness around issues impacting women of color and the Filipino community. She is a strong ally to other communities who face similar human rights violations and forms of oppression."

As the first in her family to attend college, Oliveros received her bachelor's degree in speech communication from Western Oregon University, master's degree in education from Portland State University and is currently completing her doctorate in education with an emphasis in community college leadership at Oregon State University.

"I greatly appreciate the recognition and am honored to accept this award on behalf of the Filipino

community and Portland Community College," Oliveros said. "My motivation is in service to the people. I appreciate the opportunity to join other Filipina women in an effort to raise awareness of critical leadership issues, especially the ever-worsening human rights violations in the Philippines under President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo."

For more than a decade, Oliveros has provided leadership and direction for programs and services for Filipinos, Filipino Americans, and students of color as the coordinator of the Multicultural Center.

Since 1997, she has led community and campus efforts to link theory and practice through leadership development, political education, and organizing among youth, students, and allies to address systems of oppression and work for social change.

Author to Share Journey

The editor of a book that speaks out against the loss of political rights, sexism, discrimination and other topics will be appearing at the In Other Words Bookstore, 8 N.E. Killingsworth St., on Wednesday, Oct. 31 at 7 p.m.

Alix Olson's book "Word Warriors: 35 Women Leaders in the Spoken Word Revolution," (Seal Press/October 2007) assembles 35 influential women to artistically express their perspectives on controversial current issues.

Each section of the book is devoted to a particular woman with a creative introduction about



Alix Olson is a folk poet and progressive activist.

the author and her work, followed by two thought-provoking pieces.

CRIME STOPPERS



(503) 823-HELP
111 S.W. 2nd Avenue,
Portland, Oregon 97204

Suspects Wanted in 7-11 Robbery

The Portland Police Bureau, in cooperation with Crime Stoppers, is asking for your help in identifying two robbery suspects caught on tape.

On Thursday, Aug. 30 at 3:38 a.m., two men entered the 7-11 store located at 2815 N. Killingsworth St., stole wine, chips, and then left the store without paying. The store clerk attempted to stop one of the men, following him outside. Meanwhile, the second man took items from the store and followed the clerk outside. Once outside, the clerk was confronted by both of the suspects and possibly two other associates waiting in the getaway vehicle.

The clerk returned to the store, grabbed a metal pipe, and went back outside. After a struggle, the clerk lost control of the pipe, and was savagely beaten with it by the men. The clerk sustained serious head trauma, including bleeding on the brain and a skull fracture. The suspects fled the scene, but were captured on surveillance video.

Suspect #1 is described as a black male in his 20's, 5'9" tall and 160 pounds. He was wearing a blue baseball cap with a yellow emblem, long-sleeved blue shirt with horizontal stripes on the sleeves and blue jeans.

Suspect #2 is described as a Pacific Islander male in his 20's, 6'2" tall, 230 pounds, goatee, and long bushy hair in a ponytail. He was wearing a gray sleeveless T-shirt with the Heineken logo on the back, and dark-colored shorts with white stripes. The suspects fled the scene in an older maroon or similar colored large sedan.

Crime Stoppers is offering a cash reward of up to \$1,000 for information, reported to Crime Stoppers, that leads to an arrest in this case, or any unsolved felony, and you remain anonymous. Call Crime Stoppers at 503-823-HELP (4357).

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