

Political or not political

"They had better take a look to be sure his skirts are as clean as possible before they recommend someone to be hired" said Regent Schwartzkopf in August after the Board had turned down Michael Davis' appointment.

"I can only assume the Board had access to information which neither Bob (Robert Dewey, chairman of the Dept. of Philosophy) nor I had seen," commented Melvin George, Dean of Arts and Sciences. "I wasn't privy to the Board meeting, but I prefer to believe they acted on information I didn't have," he continued.

The two month period of secrecy that followed the Board's August decision served mainly to whet the appetites of those who were concerned with the case as well as raise the general level of interest in the matter. Now that the public is being permitted a good peek under Davis' "skirts," it appears that the Board did not have access to special information.

All of the reasons given in their letter were known by some members of the academic community — perhaps more factually than the Regents because some of them had taken the trouble to contact Davis himself.

It is most unfortunate that the Regents chose to cloak their movements for the best interests of the University demand that these matters are public. The regents may now find that their secrecy has forced the issue while their position might have been stronger if they had released the information in August.

Of the four reasons given, Davis repudiated the first as entirely false, stating he did not even attend the reception where he allegedly made offensive remarks. He also repudiated as false the fourth charge that he accused president Fleming of "repressive and noncommunicative" attitudes, and this quotation was the mainstay of the Regents' charge that Davis was not objective.

Reason three states merely that Davis had been arrested and found guilty of trespassing. This certainly is a minor point and ignores the fact that he was involved in nonviolent social protest to urge a county board to release surplus funds to the needy. The letter also fails to point out that 200 others were arrested with Davis and that the board changed their minds the next day and issued the funds.

Finally, the Regents were critical of a four day fast that Davis held in the Michigan Administration Building and quoted from a statement that Davis wrote to explain his action. Davis' reply that the Regents received the statement two months after their August decision bears investigation for a substantial part of their argument rests on quotations from the statement. In its entirety (in the Regents' selections) Davis' statement is a cogent, responsible document which is constructive and nonviolent in its approach.

By being secret, not holding open meetings and not contacting Davis to check their information, the Regents may have condemned themselves to a difficult, if not untenable, position. The examples cited in their letter are open to question on matters of accuracy as well as importance.

The Regents' approach to the whole matter has given it greater significance and a wider audience than would have been the case in August. And a matter that was described as "social" by a Board member now appears to be more a criticism of Davis' efforts to effect his political beliefs.

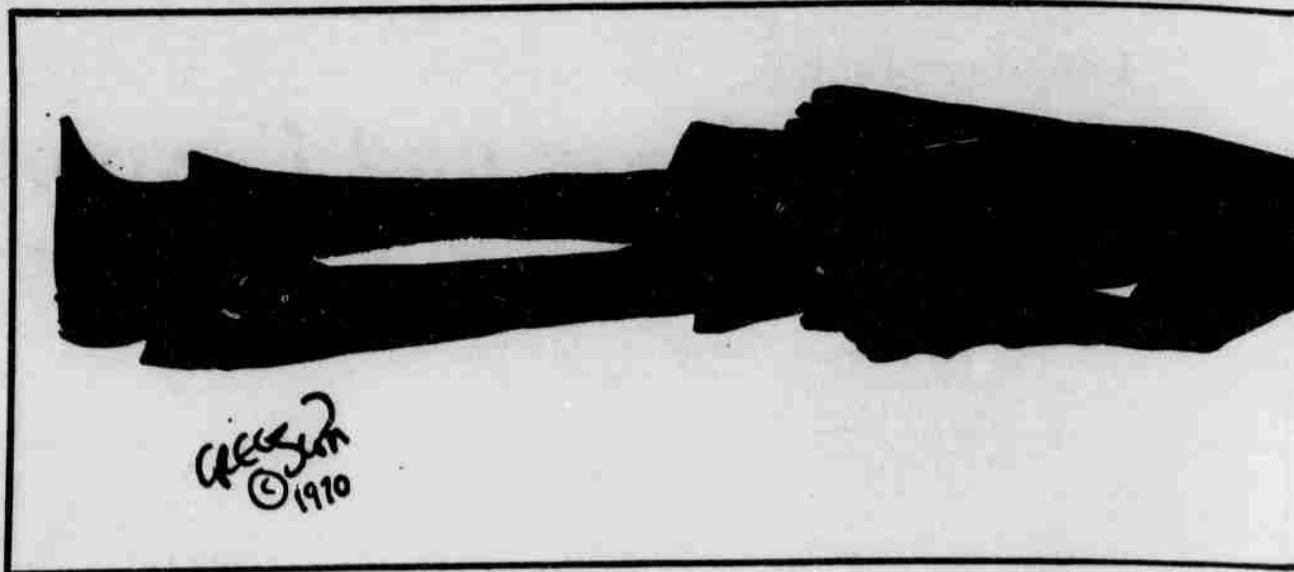
Indeed, the two alleged incidents which might have been interpreted as social matters have been denounced by Davis as false. That leaves only a conviction for trespassing (based on personal convictions) and his fast and sitting in an administration building — matters more political than social.

The Regents' decision will undoubtedly be investigated further, as it should be. At this point, it appears that the Board has acted on inaccurate information and that their decision has infringed on Michael Davis' political and academic rights.

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Letters

The Great debate

Dear Editor:

The debate between the candidates for Governor of Nebraska, held in the Union on Oct 22, was no debate at all. Once again the Democrats and Republicans proved that they offer no real choice between them. I had visions of the 1968 presidential election.

J. J. Exon perhaps was better in attempting to answer the three opening questions, but his direct addresses to Governor Tiemann and his often-repeated phrase, "if Jim Exon is your governor," got in the way of whatever real concern he has for the issues of war, racism, poverty, pollution, education, and business in this state and throughout the country.

Both candidates demonstrated their concern for the University only in terms of budget. How much should we or should we not spend for this or that? Both men were given the opportunity to deal with the questions which are being raised by students on every college campus in the country, when asked to comment on the use of National Guard troops and on the Scranton report.

Neither man availed himself of this chance, but tried to measure what amount of "disruption" warrants the use of troops. Our cry last spring simply was, "No more business as usual."

J. J. Exon and Governor Tiemann appear to be men willing to talk with young people in order to consider points of view. However, I wonder if either man would be able to come out from behind their hand-shaking, back-slapping, and personal diatribes, to consider the principles upon which they would govern, that is, to serve the people of this state. I was astonished at their little tete-a-tetes up on the platform. Even Spiro T. Agnew would have something to say about this. Or would he?

Paul Suter

Stillman project

Dear Editor:

Several inaccurate and one-sided comments have been made in past articles about the Stillman Program and its participants. I want to present my side of the issue, set some facts straight and, hopefully, be open-minded about it.

The purpose of the Stillman

Program is to enable whites to live with, work with and relate to Blacks. Most of our hatred and prejudice today comes from fear, ignorance and just plain not knowing the other person.

I think of most people whom I know closely with warmth and affection, including friends at Stillman — friends I hope to see again soon. In helping me to live with, work with and relate to Blacks, the Stillman Program was very successful.

My statement, "I agree that Stillman is run like a high school," may have been an unfortunate statement on my part, irrational and difficult to define. If one had come from a high school of 2,000, it would be hard to see any small college as a college. Also, as was mentioned, one cannot compare Stillman College, with an enrollment of 700, to the University of Nebraska, with 20,000 students.

If I had wanted an academic education, I would have remained at NU. Stillman just cannot offer courses such as Soil and Water Management, Crop Ecology, and Range and Forage Crops.

Stillman has some poor courses and teachers, but it also has some very good teachers and relevant courses just as dear old NU has both interesting and dull courses as well as stimulating and stifling teachers.

Perhaps my courses at Stillman were easier because I've had a good academic education and the Blacks have had to settle for second best, but I've had a few easy courses at Nebraska too. Some of us exchange students are capable of pulling "A's" at Nebraska.

I wish I had become more involved while I was at Stillman, and there is opportunity for involvement. It is just a matter of looking for and recognizing the possibilities. Involvement is the best way to relate to people and it generally makes life more interesting.

I did have an opportunity to visit Tuskegee Institute and it was a genuinely thrilling experience. Their campus is picturesque and natural beyond words. A program with Tuskegee is something to consider, but we cannot abandon

the established, successful program with Stillman

Some people may think I was on an ego trip and that I should stay home from now on; some may think I wasted my time — but I know it was very worthwhile and that's what counts. Only interaction between people will bridge the racial gap. I want to help more people realize this and open the door to this golden opportunity.

Roger Rinne
Co-Chairman
Stillman Exchange

Racist radio

Dear Editor:

On Friday, Oct. 16, at approximately 9:30 a.m. on radio station KLMS, racism reached a new high in Lincoln. What's that you say? You didn't think it existed in Lincoln? Well it always has, but until this time it has been a bit more subtle.

I do not know the name of the disc jockey but the remark went something like this.

A public service announcement was being given concerning a coon-hunting organization in the Lincoln area. When reference was made as to the location of the next coon hunt meeting, the disc jockey commented that it would be held in the 22nd & Vine St. area, then of course corrected himself and gave the proper location. His bigoted remark was of course intended for the Black people who live in and around the 22nd & Vine St. area.

Please spare me of remarks that I am too sensitive or reactionary. It is just this sort of ethnocentric joke-making which allows uninformed persons to remain uninformed and contradict much of the dedicated effort concerned citizens make to correct inequalities that exist between lower class minority groups and middle and upper class persons.

I hope other sincere citizens will respond as I am in demanding at least a public apology and removal of the person who made the remark.

But even now it is too late. The remark has been made, the damage done.

I wonder if people will ever learn to care? But no, it's much easier to sit back smugly in your easy chair at night and hope that I and others like me will let your mind be at ease.

Well, I just won't do that!
Robert Van Cleave