

opinion/editorial

Report on firing should answer interesting questions

The investigation by the state ombudsman into the firing of Girlean Woods, a black woman who was a custodian at UNL, continues this week.

Ombudsman Murrell McNeil says although he expects to complete the investigation today, his report on the matter may take much longer to prepare. The report will be released to the public after it is shown to university officials as state law dictates.

We hope that report will address several as yet unanswered questions. Results of the investigation by the

UNL Affirmative Action Liaison Committee which conducted its own investigation only began to touch on the matter.

Their report, which was not made public, indicated that several university employees were guilty of infractions similar to those for which Woods was fired—over-extending her coffeebreak and allowing unauthorized personnel to stay in Oldfather Hall past closing time.

The Committee recommended that Woods be rehired because the infractions were not serious enough

to warrant firing. But UNL Chancellor Roy Young and other administrators decided that she should also be placed on a three-month probation.

Because other workers are not being subjected to the probation, Woods had refused the offer and she and others contend that she is being discriminated against, again. A Committee representative, however, says Woods deserves more punitive action because she was a team leader.

That point can be debated. But the most serious problem concerns

the initial actions which brought about her firing.

Why were Woods and her co-workers under surveillance for two hours on Sept. 6 by her supervisors? Is this normal university procedure? Before the firing, why was Woods' work load adjusted, as she claims, giving her the workload normally given to two people with less time? Why, if Woods was performing poorly, was she not given a warning before she was fired?

There are important questions, and, if addressed, the report should make interesting reading.

Journalists' lives produce cynicism

This week in 1879, Hugo Rosinski, editor of the long-defunct Omaha Post, was horse whipped in the streets by an angry reader. Now, those were the days!

Those were the days when a journalist didn't have to worry himself into early cynicism by routing out every hint of personal opinion from the news he wrote. One has to attribute, get sources, get it down on tape, get it down in writing, all of which really messes up a good story. The only way to print anything juicy is claim you heard it from "a reliable source."

jerry fairbanks

Give me the old days of strong words and direct action. Let me start out a story, "Congress, hereafter known as those greedy political hacks, today voted . . ." When that sort of stuff is on the editorial page, it just doesn't have the same impact.

Editorials rarely change anyone's mind. Their true purpose is to make readers feel good by reading something in the paper that agrees with their views.

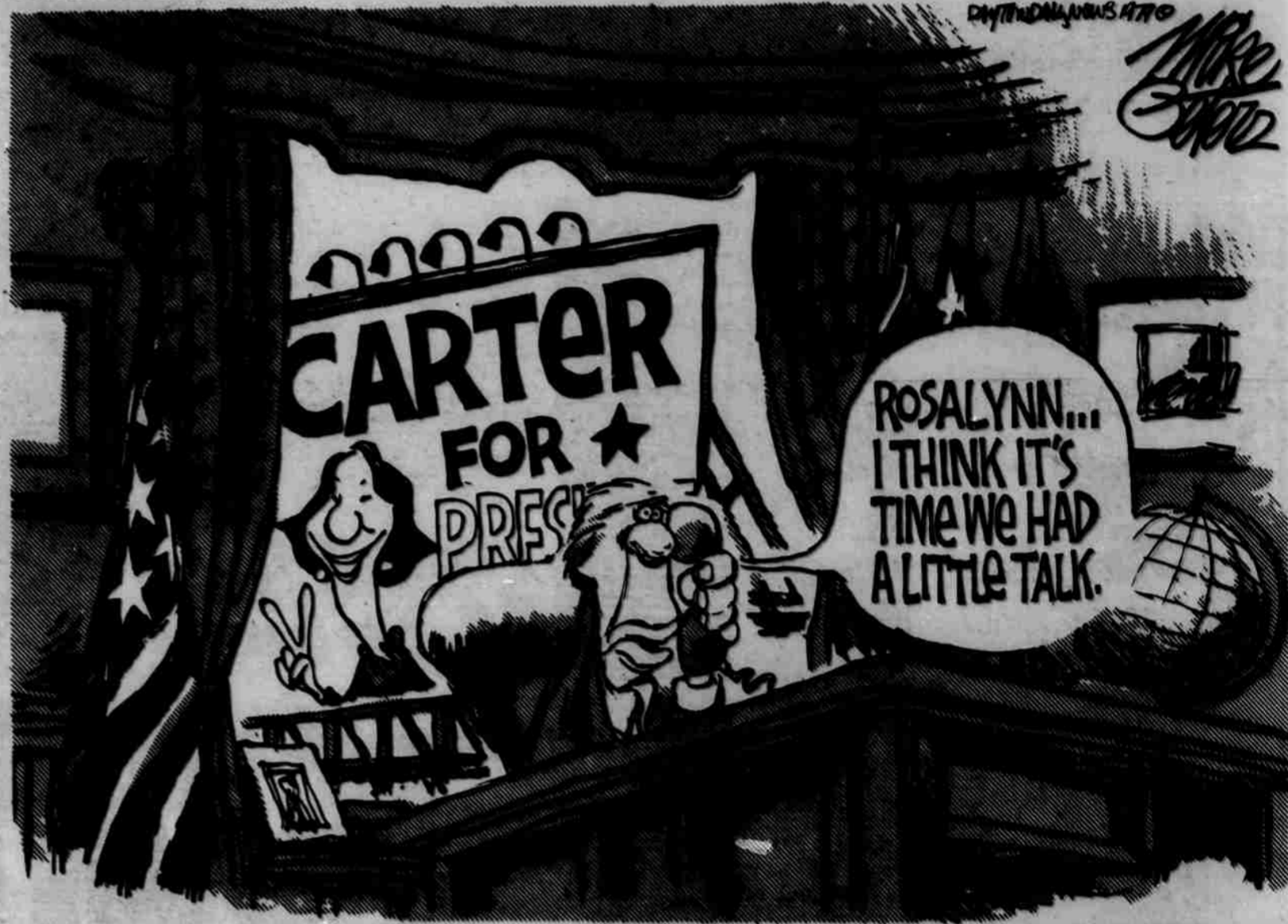
I, personally, don't care to tickle anyone's prejudices. The only thing saving me from getting horse whipped in the streets is my editor. If not for her, I'd write stuff like, "You're all fools, your heroes are frauds and your sacred cows have hoof and mouth disease!"

But outrage doesn't comprise much of a paper's output. Partly because people are funny. For example I could write, "Publishing photos of nude persons falls under a paper's First Amendment free speech rights" and there would be some irate letters from a few hyper-religious and feminist types, but that's all.

But if the Nebraskan ever did publish someone, man or woman, in the altogether, I'm rather sure the office would be firebombed. There would be an overwhelming demand for that copy for months afterwards, but someone would become a self-appointed righteous fist. People are funny like that.

I guess there aren't enough papers around. In the old days if someone read something disagreeable in one paper, they stormed into the editor's office, did some fist pounding on the nearest desk, then read another paper. With only one paper per city, it becomes harder not to read things that upset one's hobby horse.

It's to the point where the only way one can have the great fun of writing something rude, nasty, cruel, vicious, underhanded, outrageous, appalling and generally without redeeming social value is to buy a mimeograph machine.



letters

State Senator Ernest Chambers is a classic example of a racist. In a day and age when we should be striving for a sense of global unity, Senator Chambers is still trying to build walls between blacks and whites.

Sen. Chambers' statements in the Nov. 1 Daily Nebraskan were clearly indicative of the true racist he is. What other conclusions can one draw when we read about Sen. Chambers being decent when whites are decent. Or how he would rather not have to bother with whites at all. Apparently, when there is a problem between a white person and Sen. Chambers, we won't have to worry about Sen. Chambers ever taking the first step to solve it.

Sen. Chambers states that his purpose is to be a black person and to be an inspiration to young black people. Would it be so wrong if he could view his purpose as just a person and an inspiration to all young people?

Since when are blacks the only people who get picked on? Are university officials racist when a black agriculture major charges he was cheated out of a grade he deserved? I don't think I've ever met a person who hasn't, at one time or another, felt that he didn't get the grade he deserved. That's just a fact of life that everybody, no matter what race, has to put up with.

Sen. Chambers' wild stab at sports was completely ill-founded. Research, again and again, has demonstrated that participation in sports does not hurt, but in fact, helps people intellectually, physically and psychologically.

The reference by Sen. Chambers to "white women grab black men who are making a lot of money," was also inappropriate. Women who marry for money, known as "Goldiggers" have always been with us. Of course, there are just as many men who marry for the same reasons. Race, religion or ethnic group have nothing to do with this practice.

Repeatedly, I see Sen. Chambers classifying all whites together as black haters. I resent the implication that I, because of my skin color, am racist. I am sure that a lot of other people on this campus feel the same way.

Sen. Chambers talked of blacks who had no confidence in themselves and who are searching for values. These are not black problems. These are problems that all people, myself included, have.

Sen. Chambers was also down on interracial marriage. Marriages of this type are indicative of racial walls tumbling down. I'm beginning to wonder if Sen. Chambers is afraid he won't have anything to do once racism does disappear.

It would be naive to assume that racial barriers are all knocked down. Certainly, there are still vestiges of discrimination of one kind or another, in nearly every facet of life. If a person really is discriminated against, for any reason, they should complain. In the case of Girlean Woods, I don't have the facts, but it would appear that with seven subpoenas issued by the State Ombudsman that things will be taken care of justly, without Sen. Chambers ranting and raving.

Sen. Chambers does make worthwhile contributions to our legislature. He does ask questions that should be asked. But for every good thing he does he also slings a lot of garbage around. He reminds me of the boy who cried wolf until nobody would listen to him, even when they should have.

If he would just knock the chip off his shoulder and realize that most white people aren't on this planet to hate blacks he would be a lot happier and accomplish a lot more. As he is right now, his biggest limitation is his own bad attitude, not oppression. If he is really concerned about changing something he doesn't like he should quit antagonizing people and try setting an example instead.

Lyle George
Ag Econ, Pre-Law
Continued on Page 5

