

Daily Nebraskan

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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Slurs are slurs

Official's comments, apology don't cut it

U.S. Secretary for Veterans Affairs Edward Derwinski sounds like he took lessons from Archie Bunker about relations with minorities.

Hispanics -- and everyone else, for that matter -- deserve a thorough explanation of how Derwinski came to use the term "wetbacks" after a campaign speech Friday for congressional candidate Ally Milder.

Derwinski used the term while answering a question at a south Omaha veterans' post on the difficulty of drug interdiction efforts and the need to emphasize treatment for drug addiction, television station KMTV reported.

Later, he apologized for what he called a slip of the tongue.

But his explanation for using the slur qualifies his apology:

"... That's, I think, a phrase that you know is commonly used. Certainly it has no intention of being disrespectful other than descriptive."

When did racial and ethnic slurs become respectful forms of address? And what is the descriptive value of using a term such as "wetback?"

Any slur is automatically offensive. That's why it is a slur. Just because a term is used commonly in referring to a group doesn't make it acceptable. Some of the women in Derwinski's office might be able to tell him that.

Derwinski has been criticized for using names such as "Zsa Zsa" and "Little Miss Coffee Maker" to address women who work in his office, The Associated Press reported.

He said he has an informal office and, again, that he intended no disrespect.

Derwinski ought to ask those he insults about the insensitivity of his remarks -- and then offer unqualified apologies.

-- Eric Pfanner
for the Daily Nebraskan

Students should think about draft

It's a hypothetical scenario, but University of Nebraska-Lincoln students still ought to start thinking about what they would do if called up to serve in the military.

The relatively small capability of Iraq's army, compared to the vast U.S. volunteer power, makes it unlikely that a draft would be called in case of a war.

Nonetheless, students still should ask "what if" because Selective Service policy has changed to include them after the unfair policy used during the Vietnam War.

College students, since mandatory registration was reintroduced in 1980, would not be exempt from a draft. Instead, they would only be able to postpone service until the end of the semester. Seniors could finish their degrees before reporting for service, a draft official said.

Under the old policy, college students avoided the draft as long as they stayed in good academic standing.

That system may have been practical -- although unfair -- when only a select few went to college.

But now, more than 30 percent of high school graduates attend college, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, even though the percentage still is weighted toward students from wealthy backgrounds.

The change in policy ensures that those students wouldn't be able to sidestep the draft anymore -- at least by conventional means.

-- Eric Pfanner
for the Daily Nebraskan

Think before spouting pro-homosexual words

Jana Pedersen's article, "First Amendment still under fire" (DN, Sept. 13) was a lame attempt at rebellion. Sure, a lot of what she wrote is true, but hey, we've heard it all before. And I think she should read Mike Royko's article on the pro-homosexual posters and a woman's generic, totally unoriginal use of the word "homophobia." Pedersen states that Cincinnati, "along with most of the rest of the American public, still haven't come to terms with their 'homophobia.'"

"Homophobia" sounds more like some mental disease. Go ahead, call me "homophobic," but "homophob-

bia" denotes fear, and I'm certainly not afraid of gays.

Simply put, homosexuality is not natural, nor is it right. One might say, "Hey, it works! We're sanitary while in bed together!" Yeah, I'm sure a carrot or cucumber would make a sanitary lover, but does that make it right?

So Jana, why don't you think before you start throwing your pseudo-psychiatric, uneducated, pro-homosexual words around. Thank you.

Bri Frimodt
freshman
pre-law



THE GREAT DEBATE Investments, ideals under scrutiny

NU Foundation tangled in economic apartheid double-standard

The NU Foundation has come under fire recently and in the past for refusing to divest from companies with ties to South Africa. Terry Fairfield, president of the foundation, has argued in the past that the private group will not allow social or political issues to affect its economic ties.

Opponents of the divestment drive have said the NU Foundation is not a state institution, and therefore does not have to comply with the Sullivan Principles.

According to Nebraska law, state institutions cannot invest in companies that do business in South Africa unless those companies meet certain criteria. Those criteria -- called the Sullivan Principles -- include: equality in employment opportunities and salaries for blacks and whites, non-segregated eating and working areas, training programs to help blacks prepare for jobs, representation of blacks in management positions and projects to help blacks improve their lives outside work.

Because it supposedly has no legal ties to the university, the NU Foundation does not list under those principles.

I don't care if the NU Foundation legally considers itself part of the university or not.

The NU Foundation raises money for higher education -- education provided without regard to age, sex, race, color, national origin, religious or political beliefs, or individual characteristics.

It supposedly then is representing the ideals of higher education -- ideals that, among other things, are supposed to teach people to look at issues from a global perspective that in-



Amy Edwards

cludes social and political arguments.

It follows that the foundation should at least make an attempt to uphold the standards of the university. Saying that the foundation does not have to comply with state regulations calling for investment in firms that do business in South Africa is just hedging.

Forget state regulations. Nebraska laws call for divestment and require reports on current investments in corporations doing business in South Africa.

Complying with them shouldn't be that difficult.

What the NU Foundation should do, is divest completely of all ties to South Africa.

Of course, economic supporters of South African business will say that total divestment will only hurt black South Africa. They'll tell you that it will drop the average monthly wage to ridiculously low numbers and put blacks out of jobs.

And they're right about that. But the argument doesn't wash.

It's the same argument the South African government has been using for years to keep people investing in its businesses.

Wages for black South Africans are already ridiculously low. Dropping them a little more isn't going to hurt that much. Especially when you consider the gains in the long run. After all, would you rather make 15 cents an hour and have no rights, or 5 cents an hour and be able to set your own agenda.

South Africa is a racist state, one with no qualms about violating human rights that have been internationally recognized for years.

The thought of our educational institutions -- whether they are public or private -- investing in companies that pay and promote people according to the color of their skin is a pretty sad one.

The university should go beyond the Sullivan Principles and divest completely from ties to South Africa. The NU Foundation should at least take the first step and adhere to the Sullivan Principles.

And if foundation members are not willing to do that because they consider themselves part of an institution that is purely economical, they should publicly admit what it is they believe about their investments.

They should admit that they support the racist system of the South African government.

Edwards is a senior news-editorial major, Diversions editor, Daily Nebraskan writing coach and a columnist.

letter

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others.

Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit all material submitted.

Readers also are welcome to sub-

editorial

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tor; Emily Rosenbaum, copy desk chief; Jana Pedersen, wire editor.

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According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its students.