

## Abortion decision fair

### Supreme Court's ruling right for women

Those advocating pro-choice and pro-life views of abortion knew before the Supreme Court decision was made on Monday, that whatever it may be, it was not going to be pleasing to everyone.

But when the decision was made to uphold the 1973 Roe vs. Wade decision and to also allow states to impose restrictions, it caused both sides of the issue to reel.

Wanda Franz, president of the National Right to Life Committee, said the ruling was "a loss for unborn children and a victory for pro-abortion forces."

This is what one would expect the view to be, coming from someone supporting the right to life.

But strangely, those who support the right to choose were also upset by the ruling.

David J. Andrews, acting president of Planned Parenthood, said that he believed the Supreme Court "took another giant step backward," when it ruled the state of Pennsylvania could keep its abortion provisions.

Those provisions include telling women seeking abortions about fetal development and alternatives to abortion, mandating a 24-hour waiting period, requiring doctors to keep detailed records subject to public disclosure and ordering unmarried women under the age of 18 to obtain parental consent or that of a state judge.

Judith L. Lichtman, president of Women's Legal Defense Fund, said that, "American women no longer have the fundamental right to make decisions about their own lives."

Wait a minute. Didn't the court uphold a woman's right to obtain an abortion?

With or without a waiting period or parental consent or public funding, women still have a right to an abortion. If they want an abortion, and are still willing to have one after getting parental or spouse consent or waiting a certain length of time, they still have the right to get an abortion.

It doesn't hurt to be sure about such a serious decision.

It's not like the right was completely taken away. The decision could have been revoked, as many people promoting the pro-choice movement feared that this alleged conservative court might rule.

But the court didn't.

Some have suggested that maybe the pro-choice coalition was not going to be happy about any decision that came out of this court. And when the decision was made to uphold abortion rights, they needed something else to be agitated about.

But whatever the case may be, it was Kathryn Kolbert from the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy, who represented Planned Parenthood in the lawsuit against Pennsylvania, who gave the most sensible response for the group supporting the right to choose.

"We are gratified that they did not go as far as they could have gone in taking away rights from all American women."

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James Mehling/DN

## Politics synonymous with press

Today, I will examine the role of the "cultural elite," the term which Vice President Dan Quayle used when trying to put the press hounds at bay. The double hit of his Murphy Brown attack and his scolding of a school boy misspelling Quayle's imaginatively spelled "potato" put Quayle at even greater verbal combat with his enemies.

The press corps has diligently kept recording his every blunder, and late-night comedians make fun every time they sense an continuation of Quayle's unintentional role as White House court jester.

The Murphy Brown episode was a watershed event for the media elite, in which category I will include people that are either journalists or late-night comedians.

More importantly, it made for an easy debut as columnist for a new member of the media elite, namely me.

The media almost takes joy in covering character politicians like Quayle, to the point that one wonders what the media would do without them.

We in America have our news flashpoints, where the media seem to converge on one topic, usually some breaking disaster, human or nature-made.

We have had in the last year the Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas episode, Mike Tyson's trip through the criminal justice system, William Kennedy Smith's dalliance and judgment day, Gennifer Flowers' alleged revelations as Gov. Bill Clinton's other woman, the L.A. Riot and, locally, the controversy over the search for the new athletic director of the quasi-sacred Big Red.

In all cases, the firestorms are meant to hit people's hot buttons, whether they involve sex, violence, religion, race, fame, money, power, chicken wings, all of the aforementioned or none of them.

To resurrect an old media firestorm,

one can examine Gennifer Flower's fifteen minutes of fame. The media elite had been tumbling in rumors of Clinton's infidelity before they hit a valid source, Flower's self-expose in the tabloid the Star, for which she was handsomely paid. The press diverted Clinton's campaign with questions of womanizing, when before they could hardly care to cover his policy stands.

Now he was on stage front with the elite truth watchdogs plaintively scoping out his pant's zipper. The salacious material and the media's sleazy obsession with a politician's personal morality made the show all the more interesting and sad for the unlucky bystander, the hapless reader/viewer/voter, America's all-around consumer.

Being hit by the media made the clever Clinton strike back strategically, using the post Super Bowl 60 minutes as his forum where he carefully spoke to the charges. The American public may not have come to any concise understanding of Clinton's policy stands, but they may well have come to detailed opinion about his romantic lives and/or lies.

The politician, who needs to get the word and the spin out to ostensibly and hopefully gullible people everywhere, needs the media, who in turn need him. They use and abuse each other, sometimes traipsing together through the beautiful tulips but more often tussling together in the sewage of humanity.

Yes, politicians and the media go together symbiotically, much like fungus and algae form the lichen, only more smelly and ugly in substance.

Although politicians are often criticized for taking the easy way out and not planning beyond the short term, journalists also often take the easy road, partly because that is human nature.

Establishment media were just as oblivious to urban poverty as were establishment politicians, that is until

the L.A. riot woke people up to the desperation, futility and rage that had as its base poverty and inequality. Then, the pundits of the press were quick to slight politicians for long ignoring urban problems.

Now, media coverage of urban poverty and racial injustice are almost where they were before, being ignored. Out of sight, out of mind. Heaven help us if we need violent outbursts before we can see there are problems out there that need to be fixed without delay. Ignorance is not bliss, but is being willfully blind to the world beyond one's selfish concerns.

There is a positive side to these media firestorms in that, occasionally, the public can become better informed on important issues. We learned about what is sexual harassment in the workplace and had a national debate on the varying degrees when the Hill/Thomas episode hit the fan.

We learned more about atrial fibrillation and Graves' Disease when President Bush had his scary medical malady, which also made us more fully realize that, indeed, Quayle is one faulty heartbeat away from the presidency.

While much of the news the American consumer is fed is redundant, superficial and exploitive, we can still get information and value out of it. We merely have to be as vigilant and critical of the press as we are of Washington.

By gosh, maybe even Quayle's shrill statement about the subversive "cultural elite" started a process that taught me something, but he sure left me a lot of room for independent learning. Imagine that: Professor Quayle assigned me a paper. Perhaps he will read this after he learns how to spell "potato."

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