

# OPINION

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Daily  
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## EDITORIAL

### Open the doors

Media should be let back in courtroom

If Thomas Jefferson was still around, he would have cringed Thursday.

Superior Court Judge Lance Ito barred the media from part of the jury selection in the O.J. Simpson case. Ito also ruled that potential jurors be questioned secretly about how they had been affected by the case's publicity.

Closed courtrooms are dangerous. The First Amendment was adopted to protect such closure.

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press ..."

In our opinion, Ito's ruling strays from the law. Ito already has limited press coverage of jury selection. Banning the electronic media and all but four reporters from the courtroom was understandable, but Thursday's ruling was not.

At least four days of jury selection will go on behind closed doors. It is important to remember that the people of the state of California are prosecuting Simpson for the June deaths of his ex-wife and her friend. And they have a right to be informed of what is happening inside the courtroom.

The press frenzy this case has generated has been crazy. Television coverage of the Simpson saga has reached as far away as Tibet. But we guarantee that closing the doors of the courtroom to the Fourth Estate will not ease the frenzy.

## QUOTES OF THE WEEK

**"We won't spend a dime more than it will take to effectively communicate to our voters in our district the issues facing the university."**

— NU Board of Regents candidate Keith Vrbicky of Norfolk, discussing his \$46,000 campaign spending bill.

**"I don't want to talk bad about them, because they're a great football team, but they do play dirty. Once they tried poking my eyes out and tried to gouge my eyes. They were grabbing me in places I'm sure you don't want to even hear about."**

— Kansas State quarterback Chad May on Nebraska's style of play after the Wildcats 17-6 loss to the Cornhuskers last week.

**"We look at how Mrs. Stoney has treated Kerrey in the past 12 months. If she's going to ask questions about Kerrey's record, we'll ask about hers. We don't call this negative."**

— Steve Jarding, Sen. Bob Kerrey's campaign press secretary, reacting to charges of negative campaigning in the Nebraska senate race.

**"It's drive and preach, drive and preach. It's horrible, and it's glorious."**

— Rachel Worontiecki, who travels around the country with her husband and six children calling for students to believe in Jesus Christ.

## EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Fall 1994 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the university, its employees, the students or the NU Board of Regents. Editorial columns represent the opinion of the author. The regents publish the Daily Nebraskan. They establish the UNL Publications Board to supervise the daily production of the paper. According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its students.

## LETTER POLICY

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 or reject all material submitted. Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions. The editor decides whether material should run as a guest opinion. Letters and guest opinions sent to the newspaper become the property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned. Anonymous submissions will not be published. Letters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names will not be granted. Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Fundamentalism

In the weeks that have passed since it came out, I expected to see somebody respond to Rev. Dave Holmes' letter, which mischaracterized all fundamentalists as dangerous and suffering from psychological disorders. I am prepared to give Rev. Holmes the benefit of the doubt, assuming he is merely misinformed and not willfully slanderous. His statements, however, need to be challenged.

First, he attempts to portray the man who murdered the abortion doctor as being representative of "the danger of fundamentalists." The fact is that every movement will have those individuals within it who do not represent the majority of adherents. How many feminists believe that all sex is rape, even consensual sex in marriage? Not many, and those who do are a fringe element. It would be wrong to line these extremists with those who simply want equal pay and equal opportunity in the workplace, just as it is wrong to line the doctor's murderer with all those who simply don't want to see unborn children killed in the name of "privacy" or "choice."

Rev. Holmes has a problem with fundamentalists who "know they are right." Has Rev. Holmes surrounded himself with people who "know they are wrong?" Everybody who takes an advocacy position does so believing they are right. Have you ever been to a pro-choice, gay rights or anti-death penalty rally? Are these people less convinced that they are right or any less committed to seeing their view of what is right enshrined in the law? Yet it is only fundamentalists who somehow pose a threat when they do the same things.

Finally, he sees fundamentalists as being "against more things than he or she is for," or as living "in fear more than hope." Nothing could be further from the truth. Most fundamentalists simply believe that the Bible is God's word, and the Bible is true. Consequently, if we believe the Bible says something is wrong, we will oppose it. Lest you rush to claim "separation of church and state," let me remind you that many of the abolitionists opposed slavery on the grounds that it was wrong in the eyes of God.

Should they have remained quiet and permitted slavery to go on in order to avoid imposing their religion on others? Of course not,

and the same faith in the God of the Bible that moves us to oppose abortion, as it moved them to oppose slavery, also provides us with a hope that Rev. Holmes does not seem to recognize.

If everything else in my world crashes down on my head and I have nothing left, I know that I have a God who loved me enough to die for me and will one day call me to stand in his presence for all eternity. It is that hope that has gotten me through when nothing else could, it is a hope greater than any fear I have ever had, and it is a hope I didn't have until I became a fundamentalist.

Let me ask this of those who believe Rev. Holmes to be right: given a choice between a world in which people acknowledge God and serve Him, and a world which denies any absolute truth and thus each man is a law unto himself, which would you prefer?

Brad Pardee  
Love Library staff



Amy Schmidt/DN

### Legalizing Hemp

UNL NORML/HEMP approaches legalization from three perspectives, none of which is so we can smoke marijuana. (The drug war has stopped very few people who want to consume marijuana from doing so.)

First and most important is access to medical marijuana by prescription when it is deemed to be the best medicine for a specific ailment. Patients are being referred to the black market for their supply because the Drug Enforcement

Agency refuses to let marijuana be reassigned as a schedule 2 drug allowing it to be prescribed by a doctor for legitimate medical use. Using patients as pawns in a failing drug is disgusting.

Second, keeping marijuana illegal has not stopped its recreational use, but has effectively prevented farmers from growing it and the United States from using hemp for all the products being produced in many other countries. From seed for food or oil, to the fiber for textiles, paper and building materials. Cannabis Sativa has been grown and adapted by humans since before recorded history. Hemp grows all over Nebraska, but we are not allowed to use it for commercial industrial uses.

Last, but not least, is the recreational aspect. Marijuana prohibition has actually sensationalized this use and created a very lucrative black market that largely escapes taxation and drains billions of dollars from the legitimate economy. As more and more professional people find marijuana a pleasing alternative to other consciousness altering substances, the prices have steadily escalated.

It is overdue to stop the persecution of marijuana consumers who violate no other law. Either make alcohol, coffee, and cigarettes illegal also, or let marijuana join the group. Bring this substance back into the legitimate economy. Tax us! The revenue would be staggering.

The existing drug tax in Nebraska is not a revenue measure, but a confiscatory and forfeiture measure. It is a means for our state to take everything already owned or yet to be earned (frequently legitimate income) without any burden of proof or right to a trial. This is applied to less than 1 percent of consumers or dealers.

We have a man in Nebraska serving 20 to 50 years in prison for sales of less than 5 grams of marijuana. This is less than five dollars worth. At the same time, killers can be released in one to three years. Why burden our criminal justice system with these victimless crimes and turn violent criminals loose?

It is foolishness that we should have to address the first two issues as they should both be legal. As for the third, do we still have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?

David Splichal  
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UNL NORML/HEMP