

Sonia
HOLLIMON-STOVALL

Casting the first stone

Free will isn't license to pass judgment

If God gave us all a free will, who the hell am I to tell you how to live your life?

Granted I'm unstoppable at Scattergories and the name Sonia does mean "woman of wisdom" (thanks, Mom), but still, even I don't think it's OK to sit in judgment of others.



After my column announcing my pregnancy, I received a few letters denouncing me as an "evil slut" and an "unfit role model." That's funny, Madonna got a baby shower and a whole day on MTV. These letters were, of course, unsigned, and therefore completely undeserving of recognition. I don't think any of us can cast the first stone when it comes to judging others — let's face it, we all do it, and sometimes we may even find it fun. Until, of course, the spotlight turns on us.

“*Something we need to remember is that we're all human beings and we all make mistakes, but instead of sitting in judgment, we should mind our own business.*”

My first reaction to these letters was to feel a little hurt, but then I realized something very important. These people don't know anything about me, so who cares? Something we need to remember is that we're all human beings and we all make mistakes, but instead of sitting in judgment, we should mind our own business. As a Christian, I believe that God gave each of us a free will with which to make our own decisions — including the decision of whether or not to accept God — so where do we get the audacity to bomb abortion

clinics and ban same-sex marriage? Whether or not I agree with any of the above is not the point — even though this is the opinion page, some opinions I choose to keep to myself. My point is that Americans love judging others even more than they love the Super Bowl. I say Americans because we are one of the most hypocritical countries on earth. The one nation indivisible under God does more dividing than a fifth-grade math teacher. We divide ourselves as rich and poor and then judge both groups as being at fault

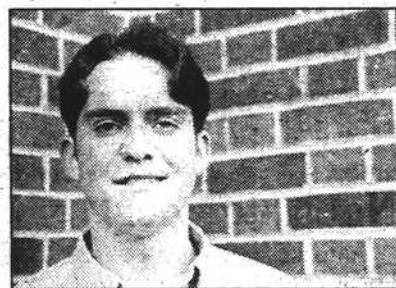
for their stations. We divide homosexuals, minorities and even families by standards that no one really seems to adhere to. Drinking, drugs and sex seem to be our favorite topics to place judgment on. While we point the finger of righteousness at countries like France, you have to admit, they do have less alcoholism than we do and they did have enough sense not to fall for that "EuroDisney" crap. I'm not saying because we have free will we also have the right to just rampantly run around and do whatever we want (Madonna) because we think the world owes us something — never that. What I am trying to emphasize is that whether or not we agree with how others live their lives, they are just that — their lives, not ours. So in our personal pursuits of life, liberty and happiness, let's try and make sure we aren't raining on someone else's parade.

Hollimon-Stovall is a senior broadcasting major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Michael
DONLEY

On a high horse

Code of ethics is a waste of time



“*We are all registered to go to school here. But I don't remember asking the university to give me my moral position.*”

Where does the line form? The University of Nebraska-Lincoln and our Association of Students of the University of Nebraska are putting together a Code of Ethics — and I want to be the first person in line to read it. Most of us are nowhere near involved with this or any other student government issue. ASUN is kind of like what the U.S. Congress would be if they didn't get any television coverage and no one ever talked about them. And although most of us are just plain uninformed, this is an issue that deserves a look. Our university officials, with the assistance of our student government, are about to tell us what our ethical position should be — but there are plenty of reasons why they should not even try. First of all, the way they are going about it is impossible. Officials have been quoted (in the DN) as saying that it is important to avoid "unreasonable expectations." The president of ASUN was quoted as saying that the organization didn't want to "impose morals on people." How could anyone possibly write a code of ethics without imposing morals on people? What do they think ethics are? Ethics — dictionary definition one — a discipline dealing with good and evil and with moral duty. Ethics — dictionary definition two — moral principles or practice.

If anyone can define ethics without using the words moral, right or proper then they win the grand prize (a one-year free subscription to my column). If ASUN is seriously trying to write a code of ethics with no morals involved and no unreasonable expectations, they are probably still staring at a blank piece of paper. Let's, for a moment, assume that creating a document with these criteria is possible. Why would we want to? Medicine, law and many other professions have codes of ethics to help members with situations that are not covered by law or, in some cases, where the good of the profession is contrary to the law. Journalists have been jailed for not revealing their sources. These codes undeniably help their members do the right thing, but as students, when do we run into these situations? Any ethical decision that the university has any stake in is covered by the Code of Conduct (which is attached to all graduate and undergraduate bulletins). Plagiarism — it's in there. Fights, drugs, alcohol and damage to university property are all in there. We are all registered to go to school here. But I don't remember asking the university to give me my moral position. Now let's assume that this is not a problem for us lowly students. What kind of moral high ground does the university think it can occupy?

The Athletic Department is no more than a business. It offers scholarships to athletes — often athletes with less than stellar academic records. The athletes provide a service and are compensated for that service. The Honors Program is not much better. If you are already enrolled at this university and you wish to enter the program, you are not eligible for the scholarship that would pay for all of your books. Why not? That scholarship obviously exists to attract students to the university, not to reward the brightest among us. I doubt if this business mentality will be included in the code of ethics even though it is obvious that this is the nature of the university environment. I am not bitter. I know this is the way the world works. You can be speaker of the House of Representatives or president of the United States with little or no regard to the ethics of your position. I only have a problem when people I don't even know try to tell me what they think is moral or right. I learned everything I will ever need to know about ethics from my mother and father. They taught their son well and I don't need help from the University of Nebraska. Donley is a sophomore philosophy major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

