

Clinton advisers wary of latest accuser

WASHINGTON (AP) — Wary of a backlash if they hit too hard, White House officials are attempting to undermine the credibility of the president's latest accuser with a quiet campaign of whisper and innuendo.

Kathleen Willey is after a book deal, they say. She's emotionally distraught, under a lot of pressure, they suggest.

Even as White House spokesman Mike McCurry denied on Tuesday that anyone was trying to smear Willey, Clinton advisers were anonymously talking about her background.

It's a more cautious effort than earlier campaigns to undercut Monica Lewinsky and Paula Jones, in apparent recognition that Willey, as a Democratic supporter of the president, may be viewed as more credible

by the public.

"You have to treat her differently because she has a different reputation," said Gary A. Copeland, a professor at the University of Alabama and author on political consulting and negative campaigns. "One of the worst things that can happen to you is when a friend turns on you."

To varying degrees, the White House has worked to discredit other women who have made sexual allegations concerning the president.

Clinton supporters portrayed Jones, who has sued the president for sexual harassment, as money-hungry and a tool of the Republican right. The White House suggested that Lewinsky, a former intern who says she had an affair with Clinton, wore her skirts too short and spent too much time hanging around him.

In Willey's case, the spin has been more subtle since Friday's release of a deposition in which she claimed that Clinton fondled her during a 1993 encounter just outside the Oval Office. Clinton has denied making any improper overture toward Willey during their meeting, which coincidentally occurred the same day her husband committed suicide.

In meetings on Saturday, Clinton aides debated the rewards and risks of going after Willey, and concluded that direct attacks would do more harm than good.

Instead, White House aides, speaking on condition of anonymity, began talking solemnly about the financial problems that beset Willey and the emotional stress caused by the suicide of her husband.

Who knows what kind of pressure

she was under when she made her allegations, they said.

Each day since then, the White House has turned up the pressure.

On Sunday, the same day Willey appeared on CBS' "60 Minutes," Clinton lawyer Robert Bennett went on ABC to cryptically promise that there was unspecified information that "seriously undercuts her claims." Anonymous sources passed word that Willey had written "consistently friendly and admiring" notes to the president after the alleged incident.

On Monday, the White House released copies of her letters. Bennett questioned whether money was motivating her and said her lawyer was "hawking a book."

McCurry insisted Tuesday that the White House was simply trying to provide factual information.

"I have not heard a single person at the White House impugn anyone else's credibility," he said. Still, he acknowledged that the White House wanted to get out another side of the story after Willey appeared "in front of however many millions of people."

Her letters were released, he said, because "we wanted to help Americans understand the fuller context of the story."

The release of the letters reminded Anita Hill of the tactics that critics used against her in 1991 when she accused Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas of sexual harassment.

"Your entire life is subject to being turned upside down," she said on NBC's "Today" show. "And that's hard for anybody to go through."

1990, '98 elections similar

By JESSICA FARGEN
Assignment Reporter

ASUN Election 1998

During the 1990 ASUN elections, a debate was held in a bar, and businesses rewarded student voting by giving discounts on beer, fast food and music.

But that's where the differences between 1990 and 1998 stop.

Besides being the closest Association of Students of the University of Nebraska election in eight years, last Wednesday's election mirrored the 1990 elections in several ways.

Eight years ago, VISION gave TODAY a run for its money and cashed in. But, like COMMIT this year, VISION didn't run the 1990 ticket.

VISION defeated TODAY by five votes in a runoff election for president and vice president. But in the second vice presidential race, TODAY beat out VISION by 89 votes.

This year, 340 votes separated COMMIT's Sara Russell and Kelly Hoffschneider from VISION's John Wiechmann and Jill Maaske for the presidency and first vice presidency.

In the race for second vice president, COMMIT's Chris Linder lost by just 53 votes to VISION's Eddie Brown.

The similarities continue.

Both Brown and Scott are African Americans, and both took the second vice presidency in a split victory.

Wiechmann is chairman of the Government Liaison Committee, and Deb Fiddelke, who lost the president's race in 1990, also led the GLC.

A recount was done this year to determine the senatorial race in the Teachers College,

and the last time a recount was done was for the runoff in 1990.

In the 1990 elections, the main two parties were greek with the exception of VISION's Mohling, who was president of the Residence Hall Association. All four candidates for the president and first vice president were in greek houses.

In 1990, Bryan Hill was outgoing ASUN president and was a member of Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity. This year's outgoing president, Curt Ruwe, is also in Alpha Tau Omega.

Even party platforms were similar. Eight years apart, they both focused on how to get students more involved and decrease apathy.

Candidates for the nongreek party, STAND attempted to combat student apathy by increasing voter turnout in an unusual way.

STAND organized efforts, which VISION, TODAY and several administrators were skeptical about, to give students discounts from Lincoln businesses for voting.

Students whose thumbs glowed fluorescent green when they placed them under an ultraviolet light, proving they had voted, were rewarded with happy-hour prices at Duffy's Tavern, 1412 O St.

Another bar gave voters \$2 pitchers, Amigos in the old Reunion Plaza offered cheaper chicken wings, and Project Import Records, 1418 O St., gave a 10 percent discount.

And instead of the Crib or Abel Hall, Harry's Wonder Bar, 1621 O St., was the site of an unofficial ASUN debate, where

"There should always be a level of competition like that. These people are representing these ideas to students and the regents."

SARA RUSSELL
ASUN president-elect

candidates and the audience absorbed questions and liquor.

Sara Russell, ASUN president-elect, said it was a sad statement that it has been eight years since an election was this close.

"There should always be a level of competition like that," she said. "These people are representing these ideas to students and the regents. You need to make sure you are electing the people most qualified."

Voter turnout also increased in 1990 and 1998. This year it increased by about 3.5 percent, and in 1990, voter turnout increased by about 5 percent.

And students who were wearing those little stickers last Wednesday that said "I VOTED ASUN" probably did not know that in 1990 those stickers had to be changed.

They used to read, "I VOTED TODAY," but ASUN realized that if they passed out those stickers on election day, they would be giving their support to the TODAY party.

Parade proceeds peacefully, breaks down city tradition

BELFAST, Northern Ireland (AP) — Defying convention in this traditionally pro-British Protestant city, more than 10,000 Catholics marched into the center of Belfast on Tuesday in the city's first-ever St. Patrick's Day parade.

Celebrants strolled peacefully to the tunes of local reggae singers and a visiting Brazilian salsa band.

But — despite written invitations — there was little participation from Protestants, whose favored patriotic color is orange and who fly the British flag.

"We're putting St. Patrick's Day on the map in Belfast," said the parade's organizer, Catriona Ruane, who in hopes of achieving Protestant involvement had required marchers to avoid political-party banners and told five-and-drum bands to skip overtly anti-British tunes.

The parade featured children with painted faces and shamrocks on their heads, Viking-costumed warriors, and a 30-foot-long fake snake. But the Irish-language banners and green, white and orange Irish flags would have been enough to dissuade many Protestants.

That kind of overt Irishness traditionally has been suppressed in Northern Ireland, where pro-British Protestant marches dominate life each summer.

Though St. Patrick's remains are reputedly buried in Downpatrick, 20 miles south of Belfast, St. Patrick's Day

here has long been a muted affair — and celebrated exclusively on Catholic turf.

Until this decade, even flying an Irish flag or hanging street signs in Gaelic was illegal. In Belfast, previous marches by Catholics were blocked before they reached City Hall.

But the peace process has swelled Catholic confidence, even in Belfast.

"Traditionally, the city center has been reserved for one section of the population," Ruane said in reference to Belfast's dwindling Protestant majority. "But we're showing it's our city, too."

In Downpatrick, Protestants and Catholics worshipped together inside the Anglican cathedral near Patrick's traditional burial place.

"I don't believe anybody owns St. Patrick," said Anglican Bishop Harold Miller, who laid a wreath at the stone monument to the saint among grave-stones outside Down Cathedral. "We call him the apostle of the Irish people. He belongs to every Irish Christian person right across the divide."

In Armagh, until this year the site of the largest St. Patrick's parade in Northern Ireland, Catholic Archbishop Sean Brady released 1,553 green-and-white balloons to symbolize the number of years since Patrick's consecration as the first archbishop.

In the neighboring Irish Republic, meanwhile, hundreds of thousands turned out for more than 30 parades. Dublin, for several hours.

ASUN Watch

And the score is...

The following is a list of goals ASUN has set, and the progress it has made.

1. To create successful programming for Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Jan. 19 as well as create a Martin Luther King Jr. Day coordinating commission for 1999.

—ASUN President Curt Ruwe said although his work on the commission has been done for several weeks, he was confident that president-elect Sara Russell would have a "seamless" transition onto the commission. Ruwe said Russell has previously worked with members on the commission, such as Omar Valentine, a member of African People's Union.

2. Research and work toward the implementation of midterm and standard academic evaluations in addition to the existing departmental evaluations.

—Ruwe said he met with Russell last Friday to exchange ideas on how to make students more confident in the evaluation process. Ruwe said changing the evaluation system was a hard process, but he was confident that Russell's administration would continue to explore options.

3. Continue to work toward implementation of a parking education class.

—Ruwe said ASUN has not worked on this goal for several weeks. Students have told him they want the class, Ruwe said, but they do not want to lose their warning tickets or have increased parking permit prices. He said it was pretty much now up to Russell's administration, which takes office April 1.

4. Work toward internet registration for classes.

—Paul Schreier, chairman of the Technology Fee Advisory Board, said he had not done any work this week or last week on this goal. He said it was time for the new ASUN administration to take over. Schreier said he hoped that Russell would continue to make it possible for UNL students to register online, but it was hard to predict how long it would take. "It could take six months or a year," he said. "You never know."

5. Lobby for student support for the "brain gain" bill.

—LB1176 has advanced past committee and to the Legislature floor, but Ruwe said he was not very confident in its success this year. He said the nature of the bill has also changed. "There is no reason to waste a lot of time on something that is not going to happen," he said.

6. Have the Student Impact and Government Liaison Committee start campus beautification projects.

—Carrie Pierce, chairwoman of the Student Impact Team, said the team has been busy working on fund-raising efforts to raise money to replace trees and shrubs damaged by last October's storm. She said they met with the new director of landscape services, Ellen Meyers, to discuss SIT's role in tree planting. SIT members plan on calling nurseries and businesses to ask for donations and want to have a campuswide service project in April to plant trees.

7. Reconstruct the Outstanding Educator Award.

—This goal was not accomplished because it was not reconstructed before last Wednesday's ASUN elections, in which the outstanding educator is elected, Ruwe said. This year's outstanding educator is Bill McLaughlin, an adjunct chemistry instructor.

Daily Nebraskan

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The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448, Monday through Friday during the academic year; weekly during the summer sessions. The public has access to the Publications Board.

Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by calling (402) 472-2588.

Subscriptions are \$55 for one year.

Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln NE 68588-0448. Periodical postage paid at Lincoln, NE.

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