

OPINION PAGES

Our VIEW Dirty cash

Olympic bribery has marred sports

Money talks, and its message can be seductive. That seduction includes the promise of wealth, fortune or favors for those who choose to listen to it.

But just as clean money helps America's citizens and its programs, dirty money can kill. Its victims: those who fall from their pedestals because of corruption or greed.

Dirty money's latest target: the very basic foundation of America's pastimes and athletic endeavors — sportsmanship.

No better example exists in today's news than the plight of those members of the committee to bring the 2002 Winter Olympics to Salt Lake City. And what a plight they have brought themselves to.

The Olympics, a symbol of achievement and excellence in sportsmanship, has been irrevocably marred because of that committee's foiled plan to bribe officials on the International Olympic Committee, which is in charge of selecting the sites.

Part of that plan was to literally "grease the wheels" by giving the IOC members cars. Others got their children's college tuition paid. Others got high-priced prostitutes to help make the decision of picking a city a little bit easier. Salt Lake City got the Olympics. Surely, the bribes had something to do with it.

They didn't get away with it, either, as the committee members responsible have been ousted and Salt Lake City may lose the event.

It's easy to see IOC members were bribed but unconscionable to condone. The Olympics brings hundreds of millions of dollars to a city. There was a citywide celebration in Atlanta when it was awarded the Summer Olympics in 1996. It's worldwide recognition that a city is one of the best.

Which makes this all the more sad. A little of Olympic spirit is gone with this scandal, as is the pride of those who live in Salt Lake City. Along with it goes some of our trust in athletes. But the question is begged: Should we trust them?

Money seems to be the central issue in all of sports. The NBA almost didn't have a season because of it. Notre Dame, Arizona State and Northwestern all had players purposely play poorly because they're paid to do so by gamblers. With every incident of point shaving, America's wariness of athletes goes up.

It's appropriate to write this editorial now, for we stand only five days from single biggest day of gambling in our history — the Super Bowl in Miami. Millions will wager money on the game, some of those wagering millions by themselves.

With the current news as it is, one wonders what would happen if Jamal Anderson fumbles a ball or John Elway throws a bad pass. Were they seduced by money to do it? What if the referees make the wrong call? Were they seduced? We hope not. But the fact that the question might enter our minds is a small defeat for America, and an unfortunate victory for dirty cash.

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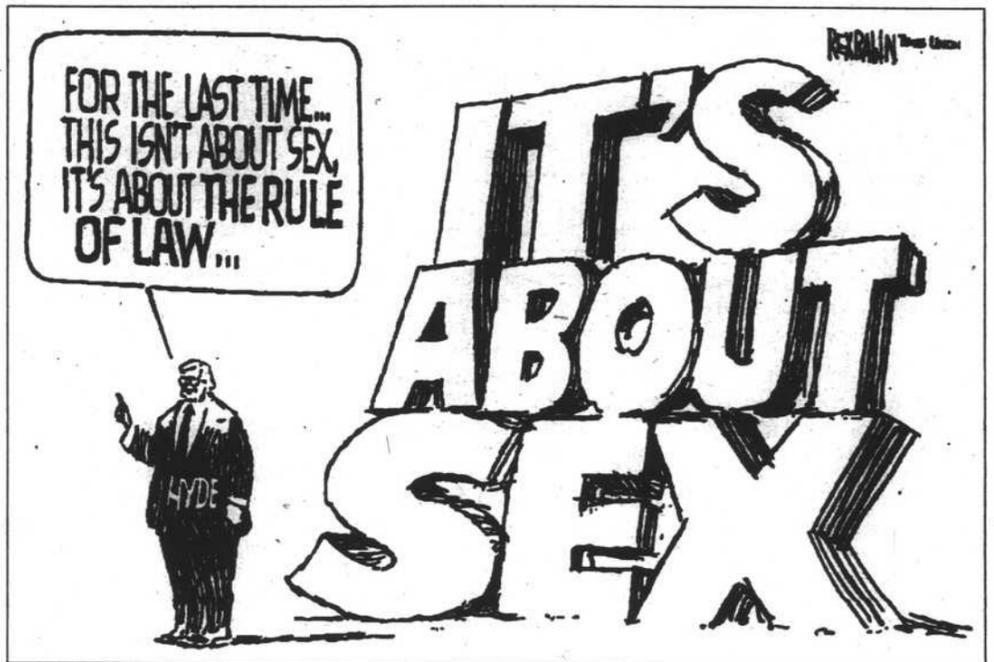
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Babin's VIEW



DN LETTERS

Problems outweighed

In response to professor Gerry Harbison's column, "Kingly considerations," Mr. Harbison seems a little confused about the purpose of celebrating Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. It is not an academic holiday, we are not celebrating King the scholar, we are celebrating King the leader, and the civil rights movement as a whole. What King did as a student has no bearing on what he did for the rest of his life.

Furthermore, I'd be very careful about calling King a fraud. Tell me, was he a fraud when he went to prison for organizing the Birmingham protests? Was he a fraud when he delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial?

Let's try to keep our eye on the ball here. Any harm caused by King's plagiarism is insignificant compared to the amount of good he did for our society. It is sobering when you think of where we might still be if it were not for his work, and the work of those like him, and a holiday is the very least we can do to show our appreciation.

Jake Wobig
sophomore
political science and
international affairs

Irrelevant point

I won't dispute Professor Harbison's claim that Martin Luther King Jr. borrowed (plagiarized?) many of his writings from the works of others. Neither do I confirm it. In my view, it is largely an irrelevant issue. If he did so and did not properly credit the original authors, then this was wrong. But when we celebrate MLK day, the focus is not on Dr. King's academic career or where he may have obtained the words he spoke. Rather, we celebrate the truth he spoke about and the power of his ideas, which belong to everyone. These include the ideas of unity instead of division, forgiveness instead of hatred and peace instead of attack.

An idea owned by one person is a weak idea indeed. But an idea which is shared becomes stronger, and all who hold the idea share its power equally.

Tom Marley
professor of mathematics
and statistics

Impact over implications

While I agree with Dr. Harbison's opinion on the academic career of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., I disagree with the premise that it is grounds not to celebrate a day in his honor. The King holiday is to honor Dr. King's contribution to the civil rights move-

ment and not his pursuit of academic rigor. His scholarship may be questionable but the impact his leadership had on the civil rights movement is not. Let those of us that appreciate the strides that have been made and hope for greater strides in the future celebrate Dr. King's birthday. This is a free country; you can do whatever you like on that day.

Bill Clarke
graduate student
chemistry

Show some respect

In observation of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. celebration, I attended Dr. Bertice Berry's speech at the Lied Center. She gave an amazing presentation, and I learned a lot, but unfortunately, that is not the topic of my letter. I was sitting with some friends, when a group of 25 fraternity men dressed in suits sat down in the fifth and part of the sixth row. No more than ten minutes into Dr. Berry's speech, 12 of

the men were slouched over in their seats ... SLEEPING. This was one of the rudest things I've ever witnessed.

They were obviously from a fraternity (because I knew some of the members), so I could easily say that these men represent all fraternity men. Luckily, I know many people in the greek system who are not like these men, so I will not make such assumptions. However, other students may. Dr. Berry's speech was informative and entertaining, and I learned a lot about racism in our society. These men could have learned a great deal too, if they had been awake. Maybe they should have taken note of a 6-year-old girl sitting nearby — she had no problem paying attention. Sleeping during the speech showed indifference and lack of respect toward Dr. Berry and her message. The action of these men reflects poorly on their house, the greek system, and the NU community.

Angie Buescher
senior
broadcasting



MELANIE FALK/DN