

# OPINION PAGES

## Our VIEW

### New lessons

*Black history noted all year in courses*

Today is the first day of Black History Month, a month that brings worthwhile celebrations as well as controversies over whether we, as a diverse country, should celebrate the history of one particular race.

The truth is, black history, as well as the history of anyone living in the United States who wasn't white and wealthy, was swept under the historical rug for centuries. That truth is well-documented and is mainly one effect of who was writing history and running the country for most of U.S. history: wealthy white men.

The result of teaching white-centered history for centuries is millions of miseducated Americans who need to learn about black history through a month of special attention to the topic — even if they feel black history is getting rammed down their insensitive throats.

But instead of focusing on the wrongs of white-centered history this year, we instead would like to praise those who enact change.

Look no further than our own history department.

Many professors there are including more diverse perspectives in their courses than were included a decade ago.

Because change takes much more work and dedication than teaching the same lesson plans for 20 years — and because that change is seldom rewarded by the grinding university finance machine — those professors must be commended by the community.

One example of their commitment to change: No "Jacksonian Era" course is taught here anymore.

It's been reworked and renamed "Antebellum America," so as not to celebrate only the questionable Andrew Jackson. Now the course educates students about the truths of a tumultuous era in which a diverse population lived and worked.

Also note, even in the large, more standardized Western Civilization courses, required reading now includes social history — an area of history where the role of women, average households and the poor provide a more varied look at old times.

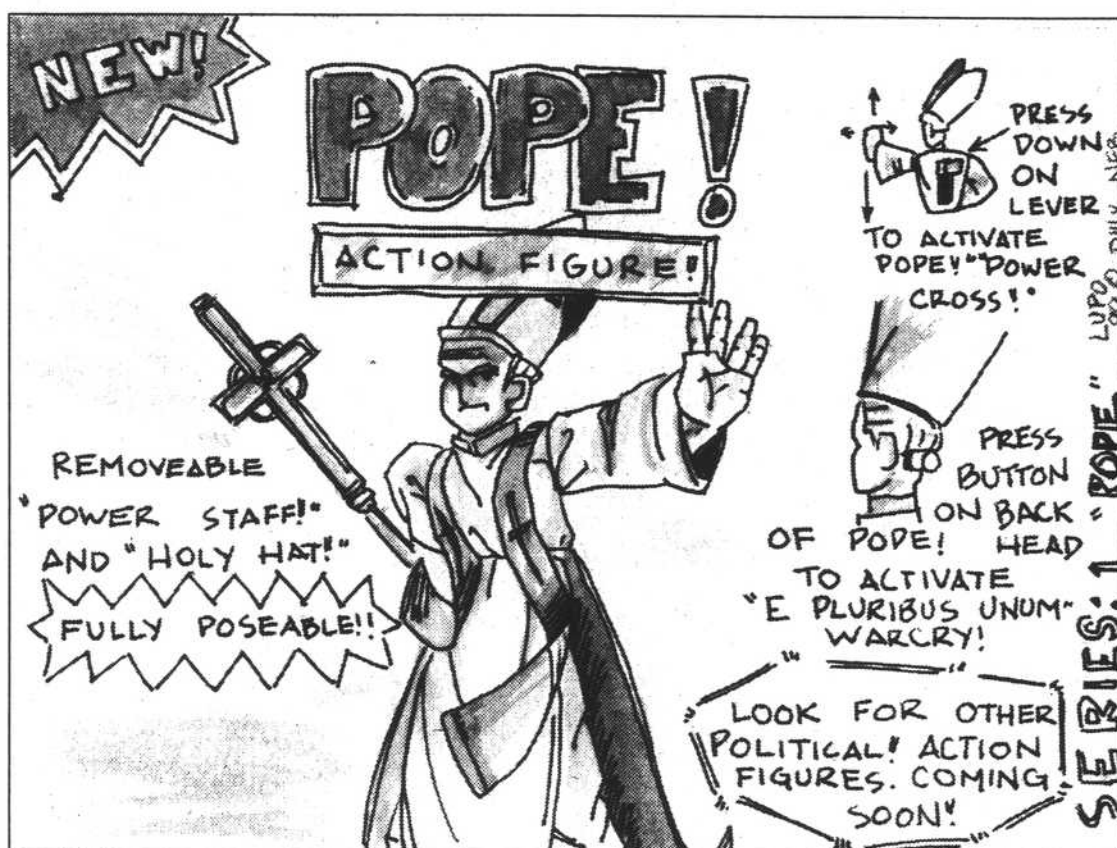
The department also offers important courses on the African Diaspora, American Plains Indians, Latin America, Islam and modern Mexico.

Such courses dispel many stereotypes and advance a more educated version of history than what students may have learned in high school.

Of course, relatively few Nebraska students are required to take more than the bare-bones history courses. Getting a thorough education is still a choice here, and it doesn't automatically accompany a degree.

But the professors who still work to better educate students by using a multi-perspective approach to teaching their courses should be acknowledged during Black History Month.

## Lupo's VIEW



## DN LETTERS

### No fair for long-hair

When reading the article on the long-haired law student, I was angered and frustrated. I was angered that an elected official, in particular, would discriminate against anyone for his appearance.

I am not a long-haired person, but I can sympathize with Mr. Glenn.

I am sure Gary Lacey would not, in an opening statement of a trial, say to the jury: "Look at the defendant. He must be guilty; look at his long hair." Mr. Lacey would follow a strict procedure of evidence gathering and trial preparation, neither of which would focus on the defendant's appearance, but on the evidence in the case that would prove guilt. So by acting as judge and jury in Mr. Glenn's case, he is a hypocrite. Before convicting Mr. Glenn of being unsuitable material for the courtroom, maybe he could look at his records and past work to determine if he himself is suitable for the courtroom. I hope he does not use the same logic when prosecuting criminals, or our county would be in serious trouble.

William Kirkland  
Lincoln resident

### Goodbye, John

Dear colleagues and friends,  
I have written many letters over the years to the Daily Nebraskan, but none more significant than this one. Why so significant, you ask? Because this is my last letter to the editor as an employee of the university. This is my parting shot, and like many of you would attest, when I have an opportunity to get a word in, I am going to take it. So, here goes.

First, to my friends and foes, thank you for making my time at UNL worth all of the ups and downs I have experienced. It has been agony and ecstasy at the same time. I will cherish the great joys and many friendships I have had here. It has been a blessing for me to have been able to share this short time with you. I appreciate each one of you.

A special thank-you to the students who have allowed me to serve them. Students are the primary reason I have worked at educational institutions since I graduated from college. It's true — look at my pay stub. The joy I have had challenging students to



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look at themselves, and then beyond, is overwhelming; to watch them develop intellectually and mature socially, and then graduate. That is what it is all about.

Second, to this community, my work here has been to help people see that we are much better together than we could ever be apart. Dr. King said it this way: "We must learn to live together as brothers (and sisters) or we will perish together as fools." Frankly, I would rather live together. However, I understand that many on this campus still see concepts like injustice, inequality, discrimination and racism merely as buzzwords. These insidious concepts are reality, and people continue to use them. The words are not the problem; the people are, and they must be stopped. Keep working to make UNL a place that everyone can call home. A place where alumni, particularly "alumni of color," would be proud to return and bring their families. This should be that kind of place. No, it must be that kind of place.

Third, to the administration, with which I have been associated for more than seven years now. Remember institutions like UNL have two specific purposes relative to helping students: first, to help the person develop intellectually, in and out of the classroom, and second, to help the students mature socially, expand their knowledge of self and those in the world around them. I have seen too many confrontations that pit the administration against the students. It does not have to be that way. Remember, if there are no students, there is no university. You might as well call this a research corporation where everyone

has meetings all day and drinks Pepsi. Students give the university life. I know the money is tight and UNL is asked to do more with less. Just do your best to maintain and preserve the collegiate experience for the young people. These years should be among the best years of one's life.

Finally, and I will shut up. UNL, like many other places, still has a long way to go to convince people that it is serious about diversity. I have seen countless faculty, staff and students working hard in the name of diversity, community, harmony, whatever you want to call it. Yet, it seems like we take one step forward and then two steps back. That has to change. The leadership of this institution has to show some real guts and make the tough decisions necessary to convince people that UNL is serious about diversity. Stop trying to cover your butts, when all that is necessary is a forthright apology. (Native Americans, bones, repatriation ring a bell?) This university has to have greater integrity and do what is right, not simply for public relations purposes. It is high time that the university was seen as a friend to the greater Lincoln community and not as a bully pushing its way through without regard for anyone else.

It's been a great being with you. UNL will always be a part of me, and I trust that you will think about me every now and then. Stop by the Nebraska Union where I will be hanging out periodically as a transient, at least until 6 p.m.

I wish you all God's richest blessings and say farewell for now.

John L. Harris

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