



# The Cavalier Daily

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TODAY'S PAPER
NEWS
SPORTS
OPINION
Lead Editorial
Letters to the Editor
LIFE
COMICS
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT
OTHER WEEKLIES
Health & Sexuality
Focus
Science
ARCHIVES
Browse
Search
RESOURCES
Corrections
Classified Ads
Course Evals
Join the CD
About the CD
Advertising
Staff
Policy Manual
Mailing List
CONTACT
Editors
Webmaster
Ombudsman
FEATURES
Faculty Salaries
The Future
QUICK MOVE
Previous Issue
Next Issue

OPINION

## A two-way street for race relations

Whitney Blake, Cavalier Daily Columnist



ONE SENATOR praises a fellow colleague for his years of service. Another senator does the same for another colleague. Both say that they would have been excellent leaders during time periods heavily associated with racial unrest -- the civil rights movement and the Civil War, respectively. Both of the senators that were extolled had questionable records on civil rights in the past. One of the senators who commended his colleague is forced to resign from his position. The other gets virtually no attention. The difference? The first is a Republican, and the second is a Democrat.

While one may think of this as an isolated incident, unfortunately, this trend is commonly seen in today's world. Whenever the issue of race is brought up, Republicans are criticized and Democrats get a pass. The politically savvy will recognize the first story as that of Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss., paying tribute to Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C. The latter event, however, missed the limelight. Sen. Chris

Dodd, D-Conn., remarked to former KKK member Sen. Robert Byrd, D-W.Va., "You would have been a great senator at any moment... you would have been right at the founding of this country, right during the Civil War..." Only one major publication, Roll Call, printed the story last week.

Racial matters are one-sided on the University level as well. Efforts to foster and celebrate minority uniqueness is lauded; recognizing distinct white culture is shunned.

Student Republican groups across the country have held affirmative action bake sales on several campuses charging minorities less money for baked goods (UC-Berkeley, Northwestern University, William & Mary, Columbia University and University of Colorado at Boulder, to name a few). In many of the cases, the administration backed down when civil liberties groups such as the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education came to the defense of the students. In some instances, legal action was taken, FIRE backed the students and the courts ruled in their favor. This received a lot of flack, and many decried it as racist.

Meanwhile, the University of Michigan gave 20 points out of a possible 150 to applicants if they were African-American. The U.S. Supreme Court struck this down, but still upheld that race should play a factor in the admissions process. This decision was regarded as a victory for equality.

A whites only scholarship for \$250 sponsored by the College Republicans at Roger Williams University is uniformly denounced across the nation. Countless scholarships solely for African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans and Native Americans totaling an incalculable amount are viewed as perfectly acceptable.

A white student is asked to leave a "blacks only" event here at the University. Dare I even contemplate what would happen if a black student were asked to leave a "whites only" event?

Minority student unions abound at the University and many others, but attempts to form a Caucasian Student Union at a California high school are ultimately stifled and condemned as racist and exclusionary by the NAACP. Organizations such as the Black Student Alliance, the Asian Student Union, the Native American Student Union, the Turkish Society, the Arab Student Organization and the Latino Student Union all are part of our university. While minority organizations on Grounds are important for promoting various causes and preserving and sharing unique cultural heritages with the University community, I doubt that if an individual wanted to found an organization devoted to the traditions and accomplishments of the white male, it would be met with toleration.

While most of these examples contain inherently wrong and unequal premises, only one side is held accountable -- the Republican and/or the white individual. This is a misguided perception, and until this changes, racism cannot be eliminated.

Racism is a horrible, despicable dogma that has been ingrained in the minds of some individuals in our society. Fortunately, great efforts by courageous leaders, time and healing have eradicated this doctrine from the majority of American's hearts and minds. However, racism still does exist, and I doubt it will ever be completely annihilated.

One must realize, though, that racism can exist in the minds of all Americans, regardless of their own race. Caucasians, African Americans, Italian Americans, Irish Americans and any and every other sect of society all possess the capability to be prejudiced.

Race relations is a two-way street. Tolerance of all people, even those that are considered to be in the majority, is essential to a more harmonious society. Applying double standards is not the answer. All must be held to the same criterion -- Democrats, Republicans, whites, blacks, Asians, and Latinos.

Let's do a better job of improving race relations by calling all individual acts of racism exactly what they are, no matter who is committing them.

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