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**USA TODAY Founder**

AI Neuharth

## Harvard mea culpa by rich, white males

By AI Neuharth, USA TODAY Founder

Harvard University President Lawrence Summers quit his job this week. The real losers in the yearlong controversy over his leadership were rich, powerful white males who have dominated the university's governing board.

Summers put his clumsy foot in the mouth of his well-educated head more than a year ago when he suggested innate differences between women and men are the reason fewer females succeed in math or science.

That controversy resulted in a "no confidence" vote on Summers by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences in March. But the Harvard Corp., the university's governing board, kept up its support of him.

Only after another no-confidence vote was scheduled for next week, with Summers again a sure loser, did he and his bosses realize their jig was up.

In the interim since Summers' first faux pas, the only black member of the Harvard Corp., Manhattan lawyer Conrad Harper, resigned. That left these bosses for Summers:

- Four white males with Wall Street and/or Washington backgrounds.
- One white female, former Duke University and Wellesley College president Nannerl Overholser Keohane.

Since Harvard was founded way back in 1636, it has been a haven for students from rich and/or famous, mostly Northeastern, white families.

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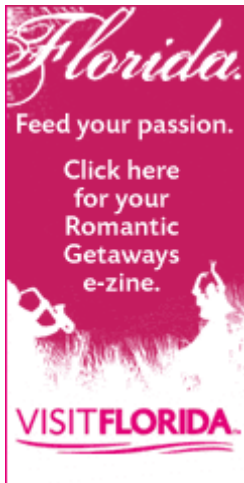
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Fortunately, the Summers fiasco should make Harvard's bosses realize that no institutions in the USA can any longer be run just by or for rich, powerful white males or their family or friends.

That's a mea culpa by them to the vast majority of us who think an education at a public university anywhere across the USA is better preparation for the real world than the artificial environment of an Ivy League school.

**Feedback**

"The Harvard faculty has such fine totalitarian impulses and Summers made such a grand fool of himself by apologizing abjectly, submitting to humiliation, and in the end being fired anyway."

- Joseph Epstein, author, *Snobbery: The American Version*

"Summers' ouster is a victory for intellectual intolerance, not diversity. Are some arguments now forbidden on campus? And if Harvard's president can't be provocative, who can?"

- Greg Lukianoff, *Foundation for Individual Rights in Education*, a free speech advocacy group

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