

Making connections: Desegregation and gay marriage

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Staff Writer

Maybe it's because this is black history month. Maybe it's because I reported on Alma Adams' speech for MLK Day.

Regardless, I wondered, "What could I have done to fight segregation in the '60s?"

Sounds nice; white guy wishing he could go back and change things. But I slowly realized my fallacy.

It would be nice to change the past, but what am I doing to change our problems right now?

Racism is still a problem, but today this country faces a social and political decision as imperative as racial segregation in the '60s. We stand on the minefield of gay rights.

"For the good of families, children and society, I support a constitutional amendment to protect the institution of marriage," said President Bush in his State of the Union address on Feb. 2. This amendment would define marriage as between a man and a woman.

By now, 45 years later, it's relatively accepted that racial

desegregation was the right thing to do.

However, many people believe that gays do not deserve equal rights. On the 2004 presidential ballot, voters agreed to define marriage as exclusively heterosexual in all 11 states that proposed it, including my home state of Georgia at 76 percent.

By paralleling what we have deemed right in our past, racial desegregation, with what our culture is battling over right now, sexual segregation, perhaps I can change a few of those minds.

"Are our views motivated by personal resentments, prejudices, and grudges, or by open-mindedness towards promoting human rights and value?" This was written in *The Guilfordian* on Oct. 12, 1961.

The writer was posing questions for a panel discussion on desegregation, but we can easily apply it to our current situation. What are our motivations for denying gays the right to marry?

"The union of a man and a woman is the most enduring human institution," Bush said on Feb. 24, 2004.

I know of another human institution that extends beyond the historical record: slavery.

So why don't we still have slavery? It is, after all, an enduring human institution.

Because part of social mobility involves changing the past. "Integration is a process rather than an ideal," *The Guilfordian* said on Oct. 27, 1961. "But it is a process in the right direction."

A process. Black rights have continuously evolved since slavery was abolished in 1865, and marriage is no different.

Women were once no better than property in marriage, a bargaining chip; interracial marriage was still illegal in some states until 1967.

Now, marriage and slavery do not warrant an exact parallel. Slavery was harmful-marriage is generally not. But both situations manifest a progression towards equality, a progression that must not stop now in either case.

And Quakerly, inner-light loving Guilford did not champion desegregation overnight.

In 1961 the college instituted integration, but two years

later Ragsdale, which was rented to campus visitors, still would not accept black customers.

"Should an organization which continues to disregard the standards and goals set up by Guilford College be permitted to continue its existence on campus?" *The Guilfordian* asked on Jan. 18, 1963. "An answer hardly seems necessary."

Freedom and equality are the standards of this country, and personal values that contradict these goals have no place in law making.

We must constantly reassess our values and how they affect other people. The "enduring human institution" of marriage has morphed as time has forced us to face our own prejudices.

Whether we like gay marriage or not is completely irrelevant. Thousands of people approved of racial segregation in the '60s, but this country dismantled it anyway because enough people accepted that it was unjust.

What matters is if we are granting true equality to each citizen of this country. That is something in the present that

we can work on.

You don't have to protest to change things. I won't. It's not me.

Many people will, and do, and that is absolutely vital. But the rest of us have an equally critical task.

We must embody an open mind at every moment, to assist those in need and as an example to everyone else.

Looking back at *The Guilfordian* from 45 years ago, we can be proud of what this campus stood for. How will we look 45 years from now?%

Editorial Policy

Every effort will be made to print appropriate submissions of editorials and letters to the editor. They must be signed, with the phone number of the author or artist included and received by 5:00 p.m. on the Monday before that Friday's publication date. Editorials must be no longer than 400 words and letters to the editor must be no longer than 250 words. *The Guilfordian* reserves the right to edit for grammatical correctness, brevity and language.

In response to 'Letter to the Editor,' from Feb 11

Dear Ms. Molner

I would like to thank you for responding to my column with helpful criticism. I understand that as a health teacher and Guilford parent, your perspectives are invaluable to my column. I would like to address some statements you brought up.

As a somewhat straight female I write from personal experience, which has been mostly heterosexual by definition. I don't see sexuality as cut and dry as "gay" and "straight," at least. I think it would have been impossible for me to have written about the fluidity of sexuality and queer theory in an introductory article.

About condoms: as a sexually active college student today, I have experienced pressure from partners to avoid condom use. The way in which I worded my emphasis on condoms is for people who may feel fear about enforcing condom usage. I wanted to emphasize a fearlessness and sensibility about protected sex.

My column is not intended to send its readers out on sprees of casual sex. It is

written for people on campus that ARE having sex in hopes that it may be better enjoyed and safer for all.

My hopes with 'Sex and the Semester' are to do away with sexual stereotyping for the sexually active public. The column is meant to create discourse about sex, like the one beginning here between you and myself.

I do not see myself as an over-sexed guru, rather, as a person who wants to talk openly and break through myths and stereotypes that make sex so taboo and 'wrong.' I just don't want people my age to feel ashamed anymore about the sex they are having, as long as it is safe and consensual.

Samantha Kittle
Sex Columnist



WWW.BBC.CO.UK

In response to 'Two trees,' from Feb 11

Dear Guilfordian Editors:

The CCE program is blatantly a separate entity of the college, and Guilford administrators need to start holding the same standards for all of its students.

When asked why CCE students shouldn't be seen "as an option for making the extra money" Guilford's Chief Financial Officer Jerry Boothby responded by explaining the "tremendous pressure from Winston-Salem College."

This logic seems to fit more along the lines of a capitalist business and not of a non-profit Quaker-founded educational facility.

As traditional students, we are sick of taking night classes with CCE that are not nearly as challenging as the day classes we take.

We're fed up of with having to

register after those CCE students that pay a fraction of what we pay. It's unfair that there are classes that we want to take, and need to fill requirements, but enrollment is limited to CCE.

It is perfectly acceptable for CCE students to be part of the community but they should recognize how great an opportunity it is for them to be here, and they should be willing to pay a little bit more to go here than they would at some no name school down the road.

I know that I will be in debt for years trying to pay off loans so that I can be here now; but I think the education from Guilford is worth it. I know that Guilford is a nationally respected college, which is something that Winston-Salem College can only dream of.

Kyle Brebner
Junior