

The Daily Tar Heel

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Appearances Do Matter

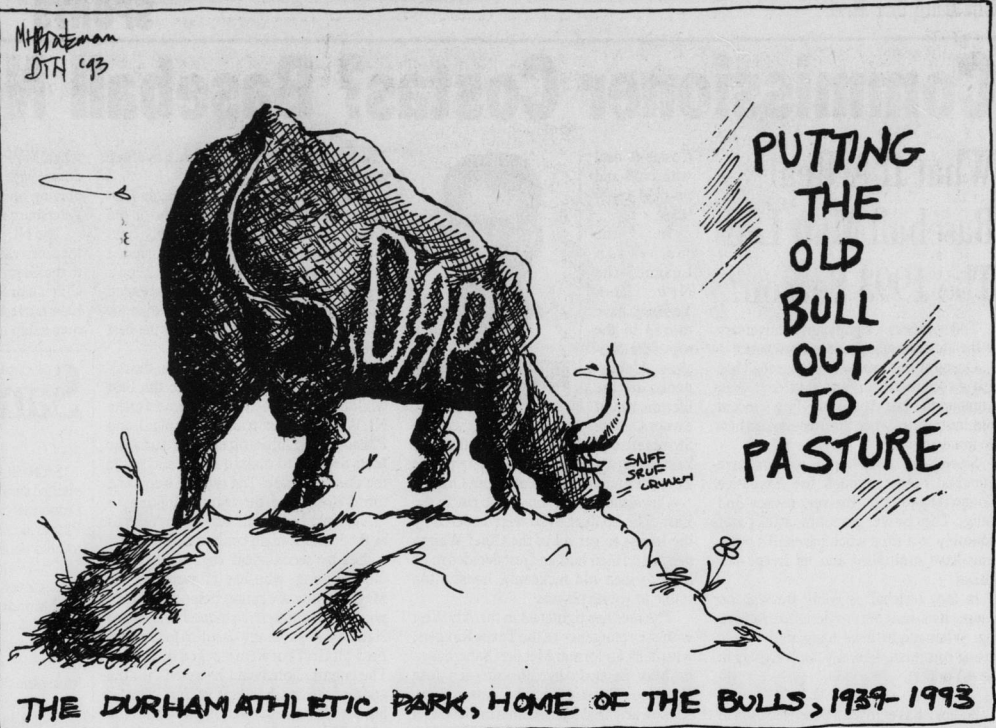
For public figures, appearances mean everything. Sometimes the mere appearance of impropriety is just as bad as the impropriety itself. Chancellor Paul Hardin approved a UNC dental insurance contract with Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Co. of New Jersey while he was a member of the company's board of directors. Although former N.C. Attorney General Lacy Thornburg reviewed the case in February 1991 and ruled there was no legal conflict of interest, the appearance of a conflict was just as damaging. Thornburg suggested two options for avoiding the appearance of a conflict of interest: 1) the University's Insurance Committee could consider choosing a different company; 2) Hardin could resign from the company's board of directors. Neither option was followed. Now the N.J. Attorney General's Office has filed suit against 45 former Mutual Benefit officers and directors, including Hardin, for mismanagement and negligence. Again, the issue of a possible conflict of interest arises. The suit against Hardin and the appearance

of conflict both could have been avoided if the chancellor had resigned from the company's board of directors. In fact, he should not have agreed to serve on the board in the first place. The chancellor of a university, particularly one as large as UNC, has many responsibilities and duties and is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The chancellor must attend countless meetings and conferences at the University and on behalf of the school. He hardly has time to worry about the management of a private insurance company. Serving on a company's board of directors implies that the chancellor is not devoting all his time to the University. It is, quite simply, a conflict of interest to his position as the University's chief executive officer. The appearance of impropriety not only hurts the chancellor's credibility, it also damages the University's reputation. No matter what the benefits are of having the chancellor serve on a company's board of directors — whether it's getting donations from the company or its officers or just making contacts with influential people — it's just not worth it.

A Productive Future

When the Department of Radio, Television and Motion Pictures and the Department of Speech Communication merged Aug. 1 to form the Department of Communication Studies, it seemed the death of production courses vitally important to RTVMP majors. But now it looks like there may be some life left in the production side of RTVMP. The Department of Communication Studies has allotted \$38,500 for production equipment and maintenance — \$25,500 more than the RTVMP department had to work with during the last academic year. That's a step in the right direction, but the communication studies department should make sure that production classes continue moving forward and keeping up with technological advances so its students can receive the best possible education. Working with updated, functional equipment in production classes is the best way to ensure the department's success. William Balthrop, chairman of the communication studies department, said he was told the department possibly could be in the top five in the nation within a few years. In order to reach that goal, all aspects of the department — from communication theory to speech communication to production — must

maintain the highest standards and provide the proper courses and instruction. RTVMP students showed their desire to take production courses last spring when they protested the merger of RTVMP and speech communication. These RTVMP students were afraid they would lose a technical aspect of their education necessary in an increasingly competitive job market. These students, who are now a part of the communication studies department, told administrators that production courses were of utmost importance to their chosen careers, making it even more imperative that production courses remain available and updated. The Department of Communication Studies already has allayed the fears of former RTVMP students who thought their education would be incomplete. The department now has a chance to show its students and the University that production courses will not be sacrificed in future years to make room for conceptual classes. To provide the most complete education, the Department of Communication Studies needs to continue its progressive move towards an education that includes all facets of communication — especially production.



Redistricting Undemocratic, Creates Racial Blocs

Taking the narrow northeasterly path of a twister, North Carolina's 12th Congressional District snakes 170 miles through the state, from Gastonia to Durham. Some have aptly likened the district, which at times is only as wide as I-85, to a bug splattered on a windshield. Exemplifying gerrymandering, the misshapen district veers off to pick up enough black precincts to carry a new black congressman, U.S. Rep. Melvin T. Watt, from Charlotte to Washington. However, until last November, when Watt and 1st District U.S. Rep. Eva M. Clayton were elected from their majority-minority districts, North Carolina had sent only white men to Congress this century — despite having a black voter population of 22 percent. North Carolina's 12th District was drawn by state legislators to comply with the Voting Rights Act, a law intended to end race-based voting discrimination. It requires states with histories of racial discrimination to create majority-minority districts, where black and Hispanic candidates will have a viable chance of getting elected. But redistricting really constitutes a compromise between minority groups eager to increase their representation and Republicans equally eager to drain usually Democrat-voting minorities out of the surrounding districts. Both benefit at the expense of white Democratic incumbents. For example, in Georgia, two majority-minority districts tripled the state's black representation and quadrupled its number of Republicans in the House. The utterly ridiculous shape of Dist. 12 is a response to this phenomena, as the Democratic state legislature strove to avoid siphoning away too many black Democrats from incumbents in adjoining districts. Hence the farcical situation that you could drive down I-85 with both doors open and kill everybody in the district. Critics of the 12th District typically use emo-

tionally-laden rhetoric like: herding minorities into "political reservations" is "segregation" and "bears an uncomfortable resemblance to political apartheid." Thus you could end up having a "pigmentocracy" with "only Farrakhans and David Dukes as members of Congress." Their underlying message is that straining so hard to redistrict along racial lines will only balkanize politics into competing racial factions and entrench bloc-voting. Supporters, however, view such majority-minority contrivances as necessary remedies for past errors of racism and lingering color barriers. For now, they're far more concerned with integrating congressional delegations and legislative bodies rather than voters. And after all, they say, North Carolina's redistricting did not give blacks disproportionate power: whites won in 83 percent of the congressional districts, in a state that is 78-percent white. Moreover, didn't redistricting help black and Hispanic representation in Congress to reach a record high of 56 last year? Nevertheless, an increasing number of civil rights leaders are concerned that racial gerrymandering may actually erode minority leverage in politics. None other than Lani Guinier, Clinton's discarded nominee for assistant attorney general, sees such efforts as "isolating black constituents from the white majority, from other blacks who do not reside in the district and from potential legislative allies." One thing is certain though — there are few

more gains to be made by packing minority voters into oddly shaped districts under the protection of the Voting Rights Act. As Carol Swain writes in her new book, "Black Faces, Black Interests": "After the 1992 elections, relatively few areas remain where blacks are sufficiently concentrated for courts and state legislatures to create new districts. Future significant growth in the number of blacks in Congress cannot come from creating newly black districts." Instead, these gains will come as more minority candidates join the relative handful elected from majority white or mixed districts — such as Jesse Helms' pal, Sen. Carol Moseley Braun, and Gary Franks. The language used to defend racial gerrymandering in the United States is hauntingly similar to that used in South Africa to justify the creation of our discredited black homelands. It is crucial to recognize that while redistricting allows minorities the chance to elect representatives from their own group, it simultaneously creates surrounding districts that elect whites who owe nothing to minority voters. Thus majority-minority districts must be used sparingly, based on the concentration of minority voters and the extent of racial bloc-voting in each particular case. Lastly, districts that virtually preordain election outcomes are thoroughly undemocratic, divisive medicine. For example, Louisiana's sprawling 4th District is two-thirds black, in a state where blacks make up only 30 percent of the population. Results shouldn't be guaranteed, but should depend rather on that most neglected of creatures called merit. Thus candidates are forced to appeal to all race groups, and the specter of balkanization is diminished. Alan Hartdegen is a junior economics and political science major from Johannesburg, South Africa.



ALAN HARTDEGEN
OUT OF AFRICA

Blacks Deserve Proper Place in American History

The situation that American blacks find themselves in today did not form itself overnight. It was not a situation that they created. White institutions created the ghetto, and white institutions have maintained the ghetto. Whether this happened consciously or subconsciously is another matter. The fact is that regardless of whose ancestors did what to whom, white institutions of today serve little more than to maintain the status quo. A white person today who had nothing to do with the past transgressions against blacks certainly has something to do with the current situation of the present and the future. More specifically, pretending that no problem exists has led to a further division between whites and blacks. This inaction has numbed the minds of many who live in glass houses. A free-standing black cultural center is required on this campus for the simple fact that it is an institution of higher learning. Being such, here of all places, a black student should be able to find himself. I say this because today the black man and woman is lost in America. Whites have a direct link with their history. They can name relatives who live in the motherland. Blacks can do no such thing. Within this fact lies everything. Being disconnected from ourselves, we do not know who we are. Not knowing who we are, we do not know what we can be. While we have done our best to define ourselves, no complete definition can take place until we are reconnected with the 400, 1,000, 2,000 years of history that has been denied us. I vehemently state that we will never reach our potential in this country until this reconnection takes place. Where are blacks going to learn about self? Certainly not in the one or two courses on African history that the school may offer. These courses usually concentrate on one small aspect of African culture. This would be the same as calling the history of Oregon the total embodiment of American history. Blacks certainly are not going to learn about themselves in Physics 101, Chemistry 102 or Economics 324. What blacks learn in these classes is about all of the famous white scholars from Einstein to Newton. At last check, none of the said scholars, playwrights or musicians that we learned about in high school came from Africa. Teach a man he is dirt, and he will act like dirt. Teach him he can touch the sky, and he will touch the sky. Dirt history is what blacks have received here in America. Three lines about slavery is all I recall from high school social studies. Surely my people did more than that. And yet, nowhere else in any

curriculum I have studied to date has a black person showed up in a position of prominence. Any knowledge I have gained has come from personal research. This is the type of research that makes me a better, nonviolent, law-abiding citizen. The type of research that can be done in a black cultural center. Blacks were taught dirt history, and whites were taught sky history. Do this for hundreds of years, and you will reap what you sow. Blacks in the ghetto, whites in the suburbs — two societies, separate and unequal. A recent article in Fortune magazine stated that whites in America enjoy the highest standard of living in the world. Blacks and Hispanics enjoy a standard of living equitable to our brothers and sisters in Trinidad, a country that needs to double its Gross National Product to reach third-world status. By the way, when is the last time you read about a country of color that wasn't third-world status? Think about it. Perhaps the biggest obstacle to any lasting change in this country is the fact that blacks and whites don't know each other. Both groups have been consciously separated across all lines of existence in this country. The only time the two groups seem to be cheering for each other is at a basketball game. Hardly the arena for revolutionary uplift. We (all of us) need to know the truth. This campus has had numerous civil rights demonstrations. You won't find that information in the library because the journals have been blacked out. We need to know that when blacks and whites first came to this country they came as equals. Equally indentured servants who lived together, prayed together and yes, started families together. In fact, white people had to be taught they were white. Black was used only as a description nothing more. Knowing what we've been, I know what we can be. I truly believe this sad state of existence for blacks in America, and for that matter the world, is only temporary. When the miseducation is undone, only then will we all act as one. Finally, I would like to emphasize the fact that a Black Cultural Center is not just for blacks. A lot of whites believe that black history is a separate entity from America and had no influence whatsoever on the way the world is today. Wrong. We've all seen what impact hip-hop culture has had. Beyond entertainment, there existed scores of black scholars of both genders whose achievements were not logged in a book. A black man

designed the White House. Blacks have fought and served faithfully in every war this country has seen. In fact, so much integration has taken place in the bedroom that at least 90 percent of all white people have black in them and at least 65 percent of all blacks have white in them. Everyone in this country has benefited from the accomplishment of some unsung black person of years gone by. Some people have asked, "Why not include other cultures in the Black Cultural Center?" To them I say, "Name another group that was brought here in chains and was responsible for 99.9 percent of the agricultural industry of the South. Name another group that has been here for 400 years." I will grant you that our Native American brothers and sisters deserve equal recognition, but no one else. Blacks have been here just as long, if not longer (Africans had boats, too) than whites. Our history in this country is just as deep. As such it deserves to be classified as American history. And as American history it should be known by all. This article is dedicated to the many who died so that I might have a chance. Joel E. Tolliver is a second-year MBA student in the Kenan-Flagler Business School.

JOEL TOLLIVER
GUEST COLUMNIST

Columns Policy

- The Daily Tar Heel welcomes guest column submissions from our readers and other members of the University community. Interested writers should contact Dana Pope, editorial page, editor, at the DTH office (Suite 104, Student Union) or call 962-0245. Please follow the following guidelines when submitting columns:
 - Guest column length should not exceed 800 words.
 - All columns should be signed and typed double spaced. Columns should not be signed by more than two people. We may ask to take a picture of you to accompany the column or you may submit a picture with your column.
 - If you are a student, please include your class, major, hometown and phone number.
 - If you are on faculty or staff, please include your title and phone number.
 - Alumni should include their year of graduation, current address and phone number.
 - Others should include their hometown and phone number.
 - The Daily Tar Heel reserves the right to edit guest columns for space, clarity and vulgarity.



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