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The Daily Tar Heel

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BOARD EDITORIALS

Fire Ford

Before he causes further damage to the University's reputation, assistant basketball coach Phil Ford should be fired.

Let's face it. Ford has received two DUI charges within the past two years. Obviously, he has a problem with alcohol that hinders him from making rational decisions.

On Sept. 27, Durham police arrested him for driving while intoxicated after they pulled him over for failing to stop at a red light.

Ford's blood alcohol content registered 0.24 - three times the legal limit.

He not only endangered himself that night, but he was also a threat to everyone else on U.S. 15-501 as well.

He made a big mistake - and it's not the first time. Ford admits to having had problems with alcohol and cocaine. And drunk driving is nothing new on his record.

Just two years ago in Michigan, Ford was charged with operating a vehicle under the influence of liquor and unlawful blood alcohol content.

What is UNC waiting for? Athletic department officials say Ford's return rests

on the results of a medical evaluation. But, despite whatever the doctors' orders may be, Ford has already done his damage and needs to face harsh consequences.

Perhaps when Ford decides to take another drunken ride and accidentally kills someone, UNC will deem it necessary to take swift action.

And what kind of message is UNC sending to the people who look up to Coach Ford? Ford has damaged his credibility with his players and fans. The basketball players should respect their assistant coach; however, the boys are probably wondering if he's going to get tanked after the game.

UNC has given Ford more opportunities than he deserved. It's embarrassing that he still works here after his 1997 conviction. But to think that he could possibly return after yet another charge is preposterous.

UNC officials must consider the University's reputation.

Ford obviously has difficulty making good decisions. But that doesn't mean UNC has to follow his example.

ERIN MENDELL — EDITORIAL NOTEBOOK

Birdseed High

What's the best way to deal with America's drug problem? Why, to confiscate several tons of birdseed, of course.

Since Aug. 9, the U. S. government has been holding birdseed produced by a Canadian farmer, because hemp he used in producing it contained detectable levels of THC, the active ingredient in marijuana.

While it is illegal to grow hemp in the land of the free, it is legal to export it to the United States.

Smoking marijuana will give you a high (or make you irritable, tired and hungry, depending on who you ask). Smoking hemp, on the other hand, might give you a headache or perhaps a feeling of stupidity.

For all of the United States' elected officials who have "experimented" with marijuana, one would think there would be at least a few who understood that there's a difference between the two plants.

Never mind the fact that the birdseed contained just 0.000147 percent THC, while the plant that people smoke to get high contains between 4 and 20. The THC detected was probably picked up by the hemp seeds' contact with the leaves of the plant.

Oh yeah, and the seeds were sterile, which means no one could possibly use them to

grow more completely innocuous hemp.

Once again the United States Government has shown a stellar use of logic.

The point it wants to make is that drugs are bad, and we need to do everything in our power to get rid of them, even if they're not even really drugs and just a relative of a plant that is used to make a drug.

Although illegal, hemp is an extremely environmentally friendly crop to grow, but because the United States has such an impeccable record regarding environmental policy, we can afford to slip up once in a while.

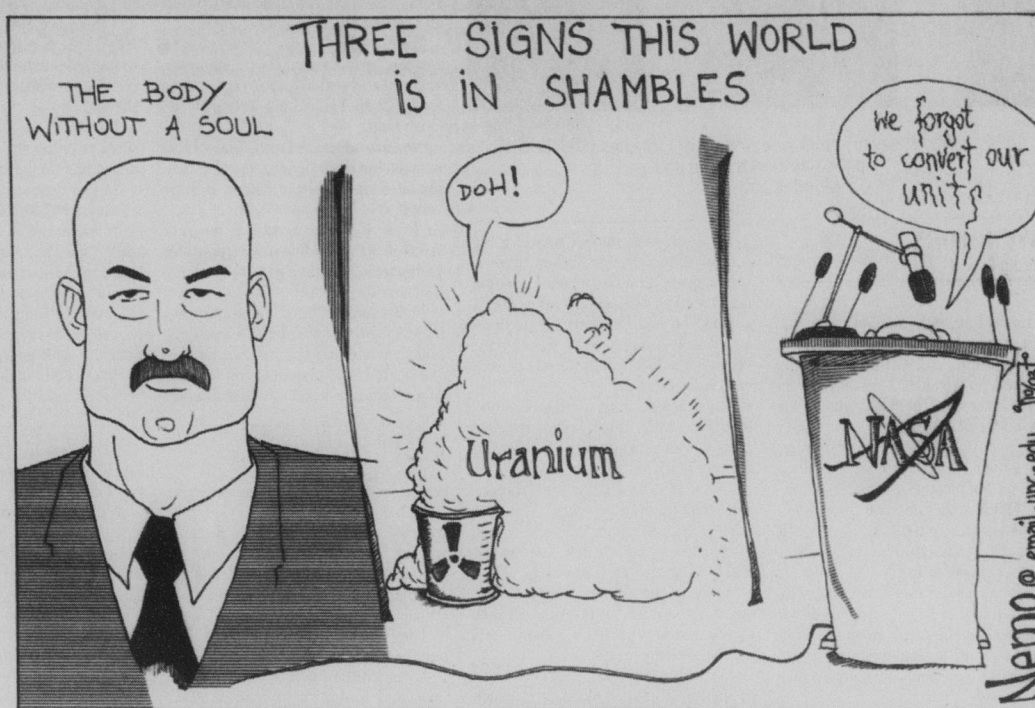
Simply because a hemp is related to marijuana, the government gets scared and feels the need to outlaw growing it even if there is no justifiable reason to do so.

It is not a drug. Hemp cannot be used as a drug, regardless of whether or not it contains a tiny amount of THC.

And even if one could smoke hemp to get high, what kind of moron would light up a bowl of birdseed?

Confiscating the Canadian birdseed is akin to confiscating several tons of bran flakes because it contained an unintentional sprinkling of oats.

Let the birds have their imported birdseed. I promise they won't get high.



Ford Must Own Up to Mistakes

Carolina athletics have long been surrounded by prestige and tradition.

But in light of the recent buzz following Phil Ford's indiscretions, the great Carolina dynasty is now surrounded by scandal and negative front-page headlines.

The question now remains, does Ford deserve to have his dirty laundry aired in public, and if not, can the Department of Athletics be trusted to give Ford more than a slap on the wrist?

I must tread softly here, for some of the Carolina sports fans sometimes suffer from delirium, and a few wrong words could see my likeness hanged in effigy.

But honest discourse must prevail one way or another.

I can't help but feel a little bit of dismay on behalf of Ford and his family. Every day, people make bad choices, and most have the luxury of dealing with their situations in private with the support of their friends and family. Perhaps a few are unfortunate enough to see their name and residence featured in a tiny paragraph in the Police Roundup, but at least their mug shots are not placed there too.

But does Ford's celebrity automatically compromise his right to privacy?

If it is determined that Ford has an addiction to alcohol, shouldn't the public respect Ford enough as a human being to let him deal with his addiction and seek the proper medical attention without headlines showcasing his ordeal every step of the way?

Yes, Phil Ford was a great basketball player for UNC, once upon a time.

And yes, Phil Ford proved invaluable and gained much respect as a UNC recruiter and assistant coach for the basketball team.

But it is also true that Ford made a decision that could have been potentially fatal to himself or an innocent bystander.

In all honesty, it rubs me the wrong way to



LEIGHA BAUGHAM
ABSOLUTE CHOCOLATE

see Ford's once-great image reduced to nothing in the course of a few days.

Too often it is so much easier to point fingers and place excessive blame on those that have fame attached to their name. But it should be remembered that everyone should be treated equally when it comes to owning up to their mistakes, regardless of whether it is a student who had too much to drink at a party and decided to drive home or an assistant basketball coach who did the same.

Ford should not be treated any worse than another in a similar situation because of weight that his name carries with it.

As past records show, this is not the first time that Ford has been charged with getting behind the wheel of a motor vehicle while impaired.

Reason usually tells us that mistakes happen; we are humans. When we make mistakes, we must accept the consequences of our actions. Our parents probably told us that many a time, so the concept is nothing new.

But we should all realize that sometimes the difference between right and wrong isn't as clear as it was when we were children, and we pushed little Suzy on the playground because she frunted us in line for the monkey bars. With adulthood comes that gray area of complication.

When Ford got behind the wheel of a car,

he made a bad decision. The past is unchangeable; all we can do is thank goodness that no one was hurt.

But if Ford is allowed to handle this situation in private, how do we know that the situation won't get swept under the carpet? What does it mean when the athletic department issues press releases that say the department will handle a problem "internally," and how can we trust that the problem will be addressed at all?

When Ford was charged in September 1997 with driving under the influence in Detroit, he had to pay a fine, pay court fees and attend Alcoholics Anonymous.

But did the handling of the incident really benefit Ford, when a little more than two years later he is again in the same position?

If Ford has broken the law, he should have to pay for his mistakes like anyone else. If it becomes common knowledge that Ford has an alcohol problem and he is allowed to continue down the same destructive path, then the next time Ford is charged with something, it could be vehicular manslaughter.

Ford should be held to the same standards as anyone else. His name should not be dragged through the mud because it makes for good headlines.

And Ford should be given the same opportunities to rectify his mistakes that anyone else would. But the Department of Athletics has to remain honest and open to see that Ford is required to pay the price for his mistakes.

Without UNC officials forcing Ford to confront his problems, the next time we see Ford in the headlines, it could be because his car collided with another, and a member of the student body was tragically killed.

Leigha Baugham is a junior communications major from Greensboro. Reach her with questions and comments at lb1@email.unc.edu.

Want to Blow Off Some Steam?

Write a guest column for The Daily Tar Heel. Guest columns typically appear every Monday on the Viewpoints page. Submissions should be about 800 words in length. Bring typed copies to the DTH office in Suite 104 of the Student Union or e-mail them to dth@unc.edu. Include your name, class, hometown and e-mail address at which you can be reached. For more information, call Editorial Page Editor Scott Hicks at 962-0245.

READERS' FORUM

Columnist Misinformed About BCC, Needs To Get Facts Straight

TO THE EDITOR:

Here we go again. How can one person be so wrong in such a small essay? This time it's Brady Dennis' Oct. 4 column, entitled "Better Uses for Money Than BCC."

Would someone please talk to Mr. Dennis?

Tell him first that the Sonja H. Stone Black Cultural Center did not get an outright \$6 million - that it's approximately half of the interest (about \$250,000 annually) from \$11 million of the Clayton bequest that is going into funding of the BCC.

The \$28.6 million won't even be touched; in fact, the University expects the donation to double in about 20 years. (Didn't DTH staffers attend the news conference that articulated all of this?)

The other half of that interest from the \$11 million goes toward the needs of the School of Law. And when the law school's needs are met and the BCC is completed, the interest will go toward other University needs as the chancellor at the time sees fit.

Remind him, too, that interest from most of the gift will go to National Merit Scholarships and student advising.

Then tell Mr. Dennis that the University's Master Plan not only calls for repairs for old buildings, but construction of a host of new buildings across the campus.

The BCC, with its auditorium, classrooms, library and exhibit space, is one of those buildings.

Ask Mr. Dennis to guess who will be using all of those new resources. Tell him that's the way the University works.

It's like the newly renovated Carroll Hall, which houses the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, where Dennis takes classes for his major. Carroll Hall has a 400-seat, state-of-the-art auditorium that is available for use by the entire community.

In fact, the BCC has scheduled a visit from poet Sonja Sanchez in the Carroll Hall auditorium Nov. 16.

Tell Dennis that when the BCC was approved some years ago, a number of departments, institutes, etc. were invited to make bids to use some of the office space that would be available.

Faculty members of the African & Afro-American Studies Department looked at their long-term needs for growth and development and determined that the BCC building would not do in the long haul. (And tell Dennis, by the way, that "AFAM" is not a curriculum anymore - hasn't been for two years now.)

Selected to share office space in the new building were the Institute of African-American Research and our nationally acclaimed Upward Bound program.

Tell Dennis, too, to talk to former Chancellor Paul Hardin about the sequence of events around the BCC.

It was Hardin's blue-ribbon panel (which included Richard Cole, dean of the

School of Journalism and Mass Communication) that approved the BCC freestanding building. All of the dissension thereafter was over the site, not the building.

Then, finally, tell Dennis to stop spreading that ugly rumor that resurfaces like a virus from time to time: that original plans called for an "in-house hair salon."

I was on the original committee that specified the content of the building - no salon.

And, yeah, tell Dennis to stop by our cramped space sometime. We'll give him a handshake, a hug and some history.

Harry Amana
Acting Director
Sonja H. Stone Black Cultural Center

The length rule on letters was waived.

BCC Name Intimidating, Should Be Called "Multicultural Center"

TO THE EDITOR:

In light of the many articles and letters written in the past week concerning a freestanding Sonja H. Stone Black Cultural Center, I thought I should give a small suggestion.

Upon my first encounters with the BCC, its name alone suggested that it might be "exclusive."

However, upon reading letters and articles in the paper, I have learned that the

BCC is actually a place where many people of all ethnic groups, races, etc. are welcome.

I went by to check it out myself, picked up a schedule of upcoming events and, indeed, saw that it was for more than just the black students on this campus.

Indeed, it deals with many interesting issues important to ALL people.

Which is where I got a little concerned. Because of the name of the BCC, it seems to "frighten away" those of us who aren't black ... whether we are white, Asian, Native American, Egyptian or Martians.

Its name suggested to me that I might not be quite too welcome there. I'm glad I've learned otherwise.

I certainly support a freestanding BCC, but I would rather it be termed a Multicultural Center.

Why? Certainly, if it is already hosting events applicable to people of all races, and if it is open to all of us, then its name should reflect that.

I recognize that the center was built to honor Dr. Sonja H. Stone, and her constant work on campus to improve race relations. Indeed, I believe Dr. Stone wanted to improve race relations among ALL races, not just blacks and whites. Truly, a BCC/MCC should reflect that.

Therefore, as we consider allotting funds for the construction of a freestanding Black Cultural Center, we should consider calling it a Multicultural Center, to include all students and minorities, whether we are black, white, yellow, red or tangerine.

Otherwise, I feel that the current title of

the center is defeating its purpose. It appears inclusive to one race only, or at least it appears not to be including other races.

If I were Native American, Asian or Mexican, I know I could be feeling left out.

As an Irish-French-American, I know that I have already been tricked once by the name of the current BCC. This is a place for all people and all cultures - again, its name should reflect that.

Please consider these things before you build a freestanding center, which is very much needed on this campus.

Tracy DeHaven-Parham
Junior
Nursing

BCC Money Could Be Better Spent, Says Member of the BSM

TO THE EDITOR:

As a proud dues-paying member of the Black Student Movement and one of its subgroups, a successful product of the inner-city and a friend of many who are affiliated with and support the soon-to-be freestanding BCC, I must say that I ... wholeheartedly agree with (Brady Dennis).

Eugene Scott
Freshman
Exercise and Sports Science



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