

The Daily Tar Heel

95th year of editorial freedom

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Fenner deserves a chance

When the murder charge against Derrick Fenner was dropped in November, a lot of people were scratching their heads. Few had ever given thought to the possibility that the former UNC running back could have innocent. Now, Fenner faces one charge each of possession of a firearm and cocaine. Despite the charges, the University has allowed him to take two correspondence courses.

He has every right to do so. Although no one could call Fenner a model student, he deserves the same chance as everyone else to redeem himself academically. If he is innocent as yet before the law, he must be considered innocent by the University.

Students and faculty may criticize officials for giving Fenner special consideration. Unlike the majority of students who apply for readmission, he appeared before two committees that determined his status. But administrators would have come under greater fire for glossing over an application from an individual with serious criminal charges hanging over his head than for granting him a hearing.

In any case, Fenner's status as a student is still very much in question. He has not been enrolled, only given

board opinion

the chance to try for readmission, according to Susan Ehringhaus, assistant to the chancellor. It could take a long time for him to amass the courses needed to become a full-time student. And even if he managed to regain full-time status before his trial, he could be forced to sit out a semester under the new UNC-system drug policy.

The motivation behind the decision to make Fenner eligible to take correspondence courses could have taken two paths. First, the University could have seen the potential to bring Fenner, who led the ACC in rushing two seasons ago, back on the football team. Athletic Director John Swofford has said that if reinstated, Fenner could be eligible to play in 1989.

Second, officials could have looked upon him as an anathema on the athletic department. His academic rollercoaster ride and criminal charges have brought scrutiny upon the entire program, and the University may have been eager to sever all ties with him.

Every student applying for readmission should be judged by the same criteria, and Fenner did not deserve any undue favoritism or criticism. Under federal law, the University cannot divulge the circumstances of his case. Students and faculty worried about the integrity of the University can only hope that the committee treated Fenner justly.

'Stars and Bars' belongs to past

In the early 1960s the Confederate flag was raised over the Alabama statehouse for the first time since the Civil War. It has continued to flap in the wind through the term of Gov. George "segregation forever" Wallace, and amidst the racial violence and protest of the Civil Rights Movement, flying below the U.S. and Alabama state flags.

But if the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has its way, the "Stars and Bars" of Alabama will be torn down and mothballed. Confederate flags over statehouses in Georgia, Mississippi and South Carolina are also targeted by the NAACP.

Many Alabamians and other Southerners claim the rebel flag is a symbol of their heritage.

Of course, a flag by definition is a symbol. Unfortunately the Confederate flag has come to imply all the wrong things about the South — racism, bigotry and Ku Klux Klan lynchings.

Debate over the issue has always been clouded and emotional. Thomas Reed, president of the Alabama NAACP, has even threatened to tear down the flag himself. Alabama Gov. Guy Hunt childishly countered that chain-link fences, erected around the Capitol while it is undergoing renovation, can be used to keep Reed out.

True, many people view the flag as a mark of the independent spirit of the South. Painted on the side of Bo and Luke Duke's "General Lee," or draped over the doors of South Carolina bars, the flag is only an anachronism, a token of regional pride.

But whatever the flag means to admirers of Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis, to those who have buried the Civil War it is a badge of hate. Television clips show the Confederate flag being carried proudly to White Patriot Party meetings. It hangs behind speakers at hate-group rallies, often side-by-side the Nazi swastika. Perhaps there was a time when the flag represented something else, something better, but no longer.

The people of Alabama should let go of the bitterness of the Civil War and stop waving the bloody shirt. No law or statute keeps the flag there, only the precedent set when it was first raised in the '60s as a retort to the cheeky demands of the Civil Rights Movement.

The rebel flag over the Alabama statehouse goes against everything accomplished in the name of equality and justice. Until the flag is taken down, it will only sanction intolerance in a region plagued by racial tension. — Matt Bivens

Readers' Forum

Athletic program retains integrity

Douglas Dibbert
 Guest Writer

The last several months have brought unusual visibility, not all of it welcomed and too much of it unflattering and undeserved, to our University's athletic program. Perhaps this overabundance of media attention serves to confirm UNC basketball head coach Dean Smith's often repeated observation that, "Athletics is to the university what the front porch is to a home — it is the most visible part, yet certainly not the most important."

Unfortunately, some media have played more than their appropriate roles as observers and caused or colored the interpretations that have been given to these matters. A reporter knowingly misrepresented Derrick Fenner's SAT scores, realizing that the University is not permitted to reveal the exact scores of any student. Others suggested that our admissions standards for athletes were faulty because Fenner was admitted to the University. Yet less than 20 percent of those who are admitted to the University as exceptions to the admissions standards are athletes. Furthermore, athletes who are admitted as exceptions are admitted by a faculty committee — not the athletic department.

It would be unfortunate to draw adverse conclusions about our University's athletic program from events surrounding head coach Dick Crum's departure. Clearly, it was no secret that there was an erosion of support of the football program over the last few years. Some cite the win-loss record as the primary concern. Sports writers have observed a difficulty with recruiting North Carolina high school students to play at UNC. Poor interpersonal communications and low graduation rates for Crum's players have been suggested as other reasons.

A thoughtful, careful, sensitive process had been underway to determine what should be the future of the Carolina football program. Last fall, Crum privately discussed his desire to resign at the end of the 1987 season. Unfortunately, unnamed sources claiming, but never

proven to be, high University officials, were permitted to move this careful and thoughtful process into the public domain. False claims were made regarding Crum's likely firing, his hold-out for financial settlements for his assistant coaches and pressure from the Rams Club.

All decisions regarding Crum's resignation were made carefully and thoughtfully by appropriate University officials and not by Carolina alumni. Our association's officers and directors, who are elected by our nearly 50,000 members, took no action regarding this matter. Understandably, members of the Educational Foundation, some 8,000, also had concerns, but there is no evidence of the Educational Foundation's officers and directors having taken action. Only at the request of the University, did the foundation's Executive Committee agree to provide the funds necessary to fulfill the terms of Crum's resignation.

Alumni should be reassured that we have an athletic program of which we can all be proud. More than five years ago Chancellor Christopher Fordham offered specific suggestions for reducing the undesirable commercial aspects of inter-collegiate athletics. Athletic Director John Swofford is one of the country's most respected athletic administrators, and just last month asked that his name be withdrawn as one of three finalists for the athletic directorship at the University of Michigan — another public university respected for excelling in both academics and athletics. Of course, we are all most familiar with the national respect that coach Dean Smith has earned over the years. Fordham, Swofford, Smith, as well as Crum, have argued repeatedly that

freshmen eligibility in football and basketball be eliminated. All have demonstrated commitment to placing academic performance ahead of athletic achievement.

Perhaps, as a society, we are obsessed with athletics. Athleticism is one area where there are clear "winners" and "losers." We can see the statistics. We can add up the W's and L's. We can crown national champions and witness national tournaments. Our real frustration is with society, which generally places a higher dollar value on athletic achievements than on the achievements of educators, researchers, and many others whose contributions, though not as visible, are more enduring than those of the athlete.

Our athletic program is based upon excellence and integrity. This is equally true for our academic programs. We have had an immense stability in our athletic program over the years. In the last eight years, we have had in all of our 13 men's sports fewer changes in head coaches than each of the ACC schools in North Carolina has had in head football coaches alone. We do not have a win-loss fixation, but we want to be competitive. We will continue to play by the rules and the alumni can be proud and reassured that University administrators will be making decisions regarding athletics in this context.

So, as we welcome Mack Brown, who appears to be a very exciting new addition to our University family, let us do it with lowered voices but not lowered expectations. Let us not be so quick to judge everything related to athletics. Let us not permit the media to color our judgment nor diminish our pride in the institution or in our fine athletic program. We are an institution with a rich history and high values. Let us respect each other as individuals. Let us assume honesty and integrity in University officials.

Douglas Dibbert, a 1970 UNC graduate, is executive director of the General Alumni Association.

Keep lifestyles out of politics

To the editor:
 To all of the Student Congress members who voted against the anti-discrimination bill for the inclusion of sexual preference, allow me to explain, once again, that the lives of lesbians and gays are not "topics for debate." Our lives are not a political issue except for the political context in which you, the heterosexual, the white, the male and the institutionally human, oppress us.

The wielding of power over the powerless is neither an exercise of the democratic process nor is it an action engendered from a "moral imperative." It is further degradation of those of us who live and breathe degradation daily because of who we are.

Heterosexuals are responsible for the oppression of lesbians and gay men. They have two options available: either work for the liberation of lesbians and gay men and confront injustice, or accept the fact that they are perpetuating the system of male supremacy responsible for not only the myriad acts of violence against lesbians and gays, but also for the institutionalization of rape, battery and degradation of women.

If you haven't realized it by now, let me make this perfectly clear: homophobia and woman-hating are undeniably and inextricably linked.

Freedom cannot exist where there is no justice. This applies to the University as well as the

THE TOP TEN HIGHLIGHTS OF THE UNC/STATE GAME

- 10 23 OF 26 FROM THE LINE
- 9 (ATE) CAROLINA'S SCRAMBLE DEFENSE FORCES EXCESSIVE CORCHIANI TURNOVERS/KEG
- 8 AL MCGUIRE STILL LOVES CAROLINA
- 7 BATHING IN THE GANGGES (CROSSOVER HIT FROM "THE FUN THINGS TO DO IN INDIA" LIST)
- 6 SWITCHBLADE ATTACK ON RANZINO
- 5 GOT EXTRA HOT PEPPERS ON SUB DURING HALFTIME
- 4 PETE CHILCUTT SLAMS ONE HOME
- 3 BOB UECKER OLYMPICS AD
- 2 VAL HOLLY-DENNIS
- 1 J.R. REID STAYS FOR TWO MORE YEARS!

J. CHRISTIAN '88

entire country. Either all persons are equal or they are not. One cannot be half equal, or sort of equal or equal except for (fill in the blank). Equality exists or it does not.

If the bill introduced had been called an anti-oppression bill, the rapidity of the Congress' decision would have been more clear.

STEVE SULLIVAN
 Evening College

Take voting seriously

To the editor:
 Yes, as we can all tell from the posters, fliers and petitions, it's election time. People will be making speeches and going door-to-door for support. As in every election, there are famil-

iar names, unfamiliar names and even a few friends running for government offices, very important offices. With such a combination, student voters should be extremely choosy.

If you're a new student, take time to read about different issues and stands. I beg you not to vote for John Smith just because it seems everyone knows who he is; that doesn't make him the best person for the office. Remember, this is not a popularity contest.

If you have been here long enough to have friends running for an office, do everyone (including yourself and your friend) a favor and ask them about their campaigns. Why are they running for office? What makes them qualified or experienced for the job? Do they have a different angle of approach for the job?

By questioning a friend or other candidates in these areas, you'll be helping in several

ways. First, it will be good practice for the candidates. Second, no one should be an ignorant voter (it's better to be a non-voter and not make whimsical decisions that affect fellow students). Third, if you decide to help a friend in his campaign, you need a better reason for others to support them than, "John Smith is my friend, so please vote for him." Yes, that does sound a little childish. That kind of a statement will hurt a candidate's campaign, not help it.

So, please, fellow students, old and new, be educated and thoughtful voters. You'll be doing everyone a favor — yourself, your friends, the candidates and the school. We all want the most capable people representing us in office.

MARY HOLLEMAN
 French
 Sophomore

Contra aid preserves democracy

Randall McBride
 Guest Writer

Twenty-two cents has never been so important to freedom around the world.

The United States will soon vote on the most important funding request that it has faced in many years. The decision to fund the Nicaraguan freedom fighters — the contras — will drastically affect our policy in the Central American region. Also, this vote will determine if communism is to gain yet another foothold in the Western Hemisphere.

The Soviet Union is devoting an estimated \$5.5 billion in aid to Cuba and Nicaragua — five times what the United States is spending in the entire region. The communist money is to ensure that the Marxist/Leninist Sandinista regime remains a thorn in the side of the U.S. defense and a threat to our citizens. Yet, some of our own congressmen refuse to believe that the Sandinistas are an integral part of the global revolution that began in 1917.

As citizens of a free country, we must actively support the cause of freedom in the region by sending comparable military equipment to the only effective organized

fighting force that stands between Nicaragua and the southern border of the United States — the freedom fighters. It is with this hardware that they can engage the Sandinistas in their country and preclude the use of U.S. soldiers to do the same when inevitable communist expansion leads to the fall of Mexico.

We can fight communism now by sending military, humanitarian and economic aid to the freedom fighters. Or we can do nothing and wait until we are forced to defend Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California — on our own soil — with thousands of our own soldiers.

Peace in Central America should be the highest priority for the United States, and we should actively seek ways to bring about a fair and agreeable plan. The much-heralded Arias Plan is simply not a viable option. It doesn't include the contras in

the negotiation process, nor does it stop the U.S.S.R. and Cuba from actively supporting the Sandinistas while it mandates that further support for the freedom fighters be stopped. We cannot be fooled by the Arias Plan, another communist attempt to satisfy the American public. Since the beginning of the Communist Party in 1917, not one pro-communist government has ever been negotiated out of office, nor has one pro-communist government allowed free elections to remove it from office. The fact of the matter is that the Sandinistas will not be the first.

We have to make sure that our congressmen know that we want to defend our country now, not later. Write, telephone, or visit their local offices immediately. They are your representatives and should be responsive to your desires. Don't you think that the defense of the United States in the Western Hemisphere is worth a 22-cent stamp?

Randall McBride is a senior chemistry major from Winston-Salem.

The Daily Tar Heel

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