

Opinion

Meese, other appointees, discredit the government

Someone mentioned to me the other day that 110 senior officials have either resigned or have been forced to leave the Reagan administration since 1980. I thought, finally, some bean-counter has had enough perseverance to do what I've wanted to do for some time now. And pondering what Ed Meese has been up to lately, I understood what another guy told me when he said "beware of idealogues."

Ed Meese is an idealogue. He's the last one standing in the Reagan regiment, but lately, no one wants to associate themselves with him. Six

Dan Morrison
Guest Writer

senior aides, including Deputy Attorney General Arnold Burns and Assistant Attorney General William Weld resigned two weeks ago, apparently in protest of Ed Meese's lack of leadership. Citing "personal legal problems" last Monday, the Justice Department withdrew James Knapp's name as the leading candidate to head the department's crim-

inal division. A few days before that, retired federal Judge Arlin Adams snubbed Ed Meese by turning down the vacant assistant attorney general spot.

So the attorney general is staffless, and the image he gives the Reagan administration is, well... in keeping with the tradition of other Reagan appointees. We had Donald Regan, a man who forgot that the president's name was spelled "Reagan," not "Regan." We had Labor Secretary Raymond Donovan step down due to charges of fraud. Michael Deaver (Reagan's long-time image-maker)

saw his own image dashed against the rocks; James Watt couldn't hang; and Admiral Poindexter and company were too crafty for their own good.

These are the familiar faces. We'll probably never hear about the other ignobles who were forced to slither out of Washington, but they are not important. What is important is the signal that Reagan's revolving-door administration gives to public officials. Granted, previous presidents have had high turn-over rates, but Reagan's staff gets the trophy.

It is assumed that people like Regan, Donovan, Deaver and Meese

are intelligent, intuitive personalities. They're considered the cream of the crop. But somewhere between personal aspiration and public duty, these men forgot where their allegiances should lie. Corporate executives don't advance by bad-mouthing their companies; government officials don't either. But that's exactly what these men have done. You may not hear the bad-mouthing come from their lips, but their actions are quite loud. By putting personal aspiration before courtly duty, these men discredit themselves, their administration, and the whole idea of what

it means to be a "public official." It means putting yourself last. It means taking credit for what is yours. It means admitting when you're wrong, and it means setting examples to others. Loyalty is a good trait, but not when it makes your boss look like a fool. It's time for Ed Meese to leave. And it's time for administration officials to know that the consequences of their actions don't stop in Washington.

Dan Morrison is a junior American studies major from Detroit.

Sex ed must teach values to prevent teen pregnancies

Teen-age pregnancy is a growing problem that calls for responsible and immediate action. Every year, about 1 million teenagers become pregnant in the United States. We need to do something about the cold, hard fact that children are having children.

Given the magnitude of the problem, it isn't surprising that efforts to promote birth control among teenagers have been accelerated. Beginning in the 1970s in St. Paul, Minnesota, school-based clinics were established in several public school systems, while contraceptive distribution programs for teen-agers were set up in several states. Thankfully, we now have access to information about the effects of this approach.

Consider some facts. In December 1985 the House Select Committee on Children, Youth and the Family published a surprising report titled "Teen Pregnancy: What is being done?" The report stated that despite sex education and contraceptive distribution programs, "There has been no change in the percentage of sexually active teens becoming pregnant, but there has been a huge increase in the percentage of teens who are sexually active." (p.378) Year after year, this conclusion has been confirmed by common experience. Even Asta Kenney, the Planned Parenthood official, says that school-based clinics show little or no effect on the pregnancy rate; and where they seem to affect the birth rate, this may be due to an increase in reliance on abortion. ("Family Planning Perspectives," Jan./Feb. 1986)

The statistics do not prove that birth control programs have caused the upsurge in teen pregnancy. However, the fact is that they have failed to prevent it. Similarly, it is not necessarily true that the unprecedented increase in classroom sex education over that past 15 years has caused teen pregnancy to escalate. But if our methods are failing to

Mark Yavarone
Guest Writer

improve the situation, then the methods need to be questioned.

What is the problem with current sex education strategies, and what can really be done to curb teenage pregnancy? Let me warn you that my view isn't anything you haven't heard before; until issues of right and wrong become the focus of sex education, sex ed programs are not going to work.

There is a common objection to this view. Moral statements, it is argued, have no place in public school classrooms. It is astounding how popular this attitude has become when one considers that its implications are self-contradictory. Consider a typical sex education class in a public school. The teacher presents students with a case history, perhaps the story of a young girl stricken with a crisis pregnancy. Various options are discussed: perhaps adoption, abortion, single motherhood. After the discussion the teacher congratulates the students and encourages them to ask questions and feel comfortable about their sexual attitudes. But under no circumstances is the teacher to espouse one point of view as being right and another as being wrong.

Here lies the contradiction. Sex ed programs in most school systems develop the attitude that there is no objective right and wrong to be considered in matters of sex. This statement is a moral statement! Whether they realize it or not, sex educators do make statements about values to their students, and ethical silence may be the strongest statement of all.

Since values are a necessary part of sex education, we need to do what any loving parent tries to do: teach

values that will be to the greatest benefit of the child. I submit that there is a broad consensus among Americans as to what many of these values are. For example, most of us would not object to telling an elementary school student that children should not have sexual intercourse. Similarly, few parents are offended by the idea of self-control and a sense of obligation toward others in sexual matters, or by the idea that marriage is the healthiest setting for having children. Why are we so afraid to teach these values in the classroom?

There are those who tell me that I am being impractical. Teen-age sex, so the argument goes, is here to stay, and there is nothing that any of us can do to stop it. More than one-half of all Americans have experienced sexual intercourse by age 17. We might as well get birth control to as many teen-agers as possible and hope for the best.

Well, I have news for you. The contention that teen-agers will not be encouraged to postpone sex is simply not true. The truth is that some teenagers will not be encouraged to postpone sex. If a little over half of the 17 year-olds in this country have experienced sex, the corollary is that nearly half haven't. There is no reason to conclude that values-centered sex education programs cannot increase this percentage, not to mention what they would do to satisfy the deeper needs of teen-agers.

The choice is ours. We can either treat the root causes of teen-age pregnancy with values-oriented sex education, or we can watch as current sex education programs and school-based clinics continue to be powerless against the problems that they were supposedly intended to solve.

Mark Yavarone is a graduate student in the department of Cell Biology and Anatomy from Belmar, N.J.

Playboy's sexist messages perpetuate myths about proper roles for women

The letter and column, written by Irwin and Knorpp respectively, in favor of selling "Playboy" in the Student Stores couldn't have been farther from the issues surrounding the treatment of women in the media. ("Pornography not the problem," April 4; "Selling Playboy in UNC Student Stores does not oppress or exploit women," April 4.) The point is not whether "Playboy" is porn, or whether men are "genetically programmed" to look at naked women in magazines. Instead, it is that in our society, lots of instincts have to be curbed. Our instinct to be violent when we are angry is curbed by law. Our instinct to steal when we "have not" is also curbed by laws.

Censorship is rarely the answer to problems involving the media. But why is it so easy to condone "Playboy"? Is it even remotely possible that the presumed male instinct to look at naked women in "please have sex with me" positions could be harmful to the women's struggle for equal treatment? Those of you who claim to be feminists, such as Irwin, please consider this: pornography (soft or hard core) helps perpetuate the myths and harmful stereotypes that women constantly struggle with in the home, the workplace and in just about every corner of society.

The sexism in "Playboy" is found in the messages it conveys about the role of women in our society: that no matter what, we're supposed to be pretty and, if at all possible, sexy. Then, we're allowed to be cool, neat intelligent people. Knorpp equates "Playboy" with everyday photography, when it is clear that it is not. "Playboy" and its media counterparts, from violence to advertising, deal with much more than mere photographs. They are statements about women in our society.

He complains about women being promoted less in the workplace. Well,

Janet Dickman
Guest Writer

if women are going to continually be portrayed as cute little sexy beings who smile when they spread-eagle to a camera, adorable sweet wonderful cooks who love flowers and perfume and hate, hate, hate cellulite, and emotional erotica-bunnies who bum out at the idea of using harsh abrasive on their new bathtub, of course they aren't going to become leaders of companies! Who in the world would trust Marge the "you're soaking in it" nail expert to run a company? Let alone Miss February... And the workplace is only one example of the many places where women are not given equal treatment.

... no matter what, we're supposed to be pretty and, if at all possible, sexy. Then, we're allowed to be cool, neat intelligent people.

"Playgirl," on the other hand, is the exception to the rule as far as the portrayal of men in the media goes. The media does put an awful lot of pressure on men to behave in certain ways, but "Playboy" is a classic example of the media's portrayal of women. Look at it: it is a famous publication with good articles, too — but for whom? The intelligent male population who reads and likes to look at pretty, soft, sexy girls in sexy poses. It is a "men's world" publication if I ever saw one.

So guys, this isn't a "fight against mother nature," as Irwin claims.

Simply put, it is a fight against the perpetuation of myths about women that no longer hold water in our "gradually-becoming-more-egalitarian" society. Leave "Playboy" in the Student Stores if you want, but the next time you look at a centerfold, try to picture her eating breakfast, crying, watching television, having an argument or (God forbid) being president.

Janet Dickman is a senior history and Italian major from Cleveland.

Add it up: some faculty don't deserve raises

I used to dislike math. Now I hate it. At least, I hate it at Carolina. Before I came here, I heard UNC was a "research" school, and professors were more concerned with research than with teaching. By the end of my freshman year, I had already encountered this attitude. But nothing could have prepared me for the frustration I would encounter in my required General College math course.

In this course, the students have no syllabus, no warning of approaching tests, no idea how much such tests count, no assigned or even recommended homework and generally no clue what the professor is talking about. The teacher has no interest in relating the course to real life or in explaining the concepts behind calculations. Students are just taught to plug this number here, this number there. If the formula doesn't work, all they can do is give up.

Two classes before one exam, the professor still claimed to have no idea what the exam would cover — but somehow he had held a review session the night before. In previous reviews, the sessions were headed by his



Blacks must push aside barriers

In response to William Lampley's attempt to enlighten the UNC Afro-American community ("UNC blacks must help themselves," March 28), let it be known that neither the Black Student Movement nor any one person speaks for every Afro-American UNC student. Indeed, there are internal problems within the Afro-American community that we must address. One concern is that there is not a thorough understanding of or appreciation for our heritage or the struggles of our ancestors.

Throughout our history, there has been a strong tradition of self-help within the Afro-American community. We have a legacy of pooling our resources. Otherwise, we would not have achieved what we have, despite barriers some white people are constantly constructing. Today, that tradition is breaking down; as we attain the symbols of success, we also endeavor to escape the responsibility of helping others.

Please remember that we and our parents are taxpayers. We have a right to be here. Our ethnicity requires that we counteract psychological warfare like that of the article to which I respond. We would not have to resort to threats if there were (1) a full commitment to our presence and (2) trust in the integrity of those making University policy. Anyone would resent decisions made for them. Who would know better than Afro-American students what we need to succeed?

Like the Jews, Afro-Americans have excelled culturally. We created the only art form born on American soil — jazz. If one would make an

Richard White
Guest Writer

effort to learn, one would discover that our race has produced leaders in many disciplines: Cleopatra, Aesop, Hannibal, Aleksander Puskin (Russian literature), Matthew Henson (North Pole), Lewis Latimer (telephone), Jonas Salk (polio vaccine), Alexander the Great, Alexander Dumas (French literature), Bill Cosby, Michael Jackson... It is well-known that many of our accomplishments have been attributed to others or erased from history books. Much of our culture and many of our achievements have been stolen. It is apparent that many people, like Lampley, speak before doing their homework. I suggest that Lampley reserve his philosophical and literary efforts to advance his education. I agree that there are enough "ignorant" people in the world.

Afro-Americans have not asked for sympathy. We have asked that no more barriers be erected. We want the opportunity to reach our potential. There lies the problem, perhaps. We know that we must be twice as good to earn half as much. Because we strive for excellence, again and again, we meet the challenge. Like the dust, we rise. We have always attempted to make the best of our situation.

I agree with Lampley that we are raised with different standards. We are raised to be fair, honest and broad-minded. We are not taught to hate and to protect power and wealth at others' expense. If others should

not be expected to understand different cultures, then why are we forced to understand Lampley's culture? Like it or not, we are all intertwined. People like Lampley need to be concerned about whether or not we make it. Recall Nat Turner, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King Jr. The Roman Empire fell when no one thought it would. The world is dynamic; nothing lasts forever. Although issues like teenage pregnancy, unemployment, poverty, mis-education and drug abuse affect the Afro-American community to a greater degree, we must realize that they affect us all.

Lampley is correct. We do have a responsibility to ourselves; however, we do not need someone who is obviously lacking in a firm understanding of our community to offer advice. Furthermore, the mere fact that he resorts to name-calling ("immature," "counterproductive" and "antagonistic") shows how little he has to say for himself. Clearly, he is not qualified to define our humanity. If we are to continue to contribute to this society, we must come to appreciate our similarities and to understand our differences, or we will all perish.

If he is genuinely interested in helping to solve some of these problems, I extend an invitation to him to gain some knowledge and to become active. The bottom line is that he has said nothing profound.

Richard White is a junior political science major from Asheville.

Sharon Kechsull
State/Nat'l Editor

graduate assistant, who solved problems entirely differently from the professor. It's great to see an alternative perspective to the material, but not 24 hours before the exam.

In previous semesters, students have petitioned against the course, voiced their concerns to the department and given the professor unfavorable evaluations at the semester's end. But the course — with the same professor — continues.

And the letter of concern and frustration about the course I wrote to the chairman was shuffled off to someone else, although my professor was supposedly told of my concerns.

So, where does this leave the class? Well, the median grade on the last test was a 50. The professor informed us that this was because we were reading the word problems wrong.

As a concession, he gave us a gratuitous 20-point quiz to help us raise our grades. Although better than nothing, the original test should

have been curved. After all, not all of us are illiterate.

Out of the five problems on the original test, one was not in the textbook and had only been demonstrated in class once. Students have no idea what to concentrate their studying on, since the professor won't give them any idea what the test will cover. And the professor canceled class the day before the exam, never even offering to review us himself.

I'd heard that the math department hates undergraduates, but never was that clearer than now. This professor told us at the beginning of the semester that he didn't like sophomores, although he could tolerate freshmen. Of course, that might be logical — freshmen may not know how to protest this course, but sophomores shouldn't be afraid to.

My frustrations go beyond this department, but they can't get much sharper than this. I am not sure where else to turn in my complaints, but this much is certain: I am paying for this class, and if I am paying for my education, then I expect it to be good, and I expect to get my money's worth. Right now, I am nowhere near

receiving face value.

If Carolina expects to remain the flagship institution of the UNC system, than it had better recommit itself to undergraduate teaching, but quick. The lack of commitment to preparing students for a career or graduate school is too often apparent in professors who seem to prefer staying in their ivory towers all day to teaching and advising the 12,000 undergraduates in their care.

And until Carolina rededicates itself to this priority, I cannot support its calls for higher faculty pay. As much as I enjoy this university and take pride in saying I'm a student here, I'm not willing to see my tax money go to a school that has little regard for undergraduate concerns. What should be the first priority of any self-respecting professor — to teach to the absolute best of his ability — is too often at the bottom of the list. Until teaching takes precedence, UNC does not deserve increased funding or the flagship title.

Sharon Kechsull is a sophomore journalism and religious studies major from Raleigh.