

Opinion Page

Court rules censorship ok; students lose

America's student newspapers were the big losers in the Supreme Court's January 13 ruling that limits the protection high school journalists are entitled to under the First Amendment.

The case that brought about this Supreme Court ruling involved the Hazelwood East High School Spectrum. In 1983, the principal of the Hazelwood, Mo. high school deleted two pages of the student newspaper before distribution because he felt that the material was "inappropriate and unsuitable" reading for teenagers. The articles were on teenage pregnancy and the impact of divorce.

"We hold that educators do not offend the First Amendment by exercising editorial control over the style and content of student speech in school-sponsored expressive activities so long as their actions are reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns," wrote Justice Byron R. White, in expressing the majority view.

We concur, however, with Justice William J. Brennan, Jr.'s dissenting view.

"The mere fact of school sponsorship does not . . . license thought control in the high school," wrote Brennan. "The young men and women of Hazelwood East expected a civics lesson (in their journalism course), but not the one the court teaches them today."

There are many reasons, in fact, why this ruling is disturbing.

First, this decision is a mandate on constitutional hypocrisy. Its message to students everywhere is: your rights as citizens of this great country do not begin until you reach adulthood. In light of this ruling, it would appear necessary to rewrite the textbooks now being used in the civics and journalism classes of our public schools, particularly the passages that guarantee "liberty and justice for all." The idea that educators must teach the principles of "freedom of the press" when this "freedom" does not actually exist is ludicrous.

Secondly, who will be there for the students to assure them that the school administrators who "exercise editorial control" — in other words, censor — are acting in such a manner that is "reasonably related to legitimate pedagogical concerns?" The fact is that the Supreme Courts has just given school administrators carte blanche to censor. While there are some school principals who can handle unlimited authority, there are many others who can not. In fact, the ruling will reduce some student publications to an existence that borders on mendacity.

Finally, the ruling in this case is indicative of the ultra-conservative nature of today's Supreme Court. In handing down this decision, the court ignored pleas from First Amendment advocates from the field of journalism and law, and dealt a disheartening blow to the rights of students — especially student journalists.

Following the announcement of the court's decision, Mark Goodman, executive director for the Student Press Law Center in Washington, said, "School newspapers are often the only avenue young people have for expressing their views, and this opinion says school officials can cut off that avenue whenever they disagree with what the students are saying."

We agree.



Photo by Calvin Norman

Witnessing the dream

In what seems to be a retrospect of an earlier time, an Elizabeth City resident watches as marchers move through the streets in celebration of the late civil rights

leader, Martin Luther King, Jr. Many members of the ECSU family participated in the march, which began at ECSU and ended at Knobbs Creek Park, January 19th.

Guest columnists

Freshmen: consider abuses of hazing before pledging blood, sweat, tears

By Martin Carter

If you are a rising sophomore at ECSU who is contemplating pledging a Greek organization: consider this:

Hazing on our campus happens yearly, and is denied yearly. Hazing is a tradition of physical and mental abuse which defeats the entire purpose of brotherhood and sisterhood. In past years the Greeks of ECSU have had incidents of broken arms, legs and ribs during the pledging process.

Hazing isn't just practiced at ECSU, but at virtually every college that has Greek organizations in America. And the abuse isn't always physical. Potential pledges have had money extorted from them and been forced to

break off relationships with friends — as prerequisites for going on line.

Incidents like these are part of the pledging process known as "underground." Since the abusive practices take place without the knowledge of the graduate chapter, they cannot be monitored.

Although many of ECSU's Greek organizations have displayed responsible leadership in the past, some campus Greeks feel they have no responsibility to anyone but to themselves, and to their pseudo community good will. They expend much energy maintaining a certain public image, but do little or nothing to maintain true brotherhood and sisterhood.

Hazing is a tradition of recklessness and irresponsibility. Out-

siders can do little to prevent it, and Greeks who disagree with these illegal practices are often strong-armed into submission. Many of the freshmen who consider pledging their blood, sweat and tears should have all the facts, and understand their personal reasons for pledging. Potential pledges should understand that they have no voice over what happens to them. During the final induction process, Greeks who haze are often under the influence of alcohol, which retards their good judgments.

These individuals have proven that they are incapable of self-control and responsible leadership.

Although non-Greeks may not have control over the Greek practices and policies, non-Greeks

can question the organizational influence on campus — especially when they are failing to exercise responsible leadership. Pledges can not only refuse to be mistreated during the pledging process, they can also refuse to be abused to the graduate chapter. A few individual acts of courage would go a long way toward putting a halt to these abuses.

Black sororities and fraternities originated because of a genuine need for leadership, responsibility, and true brotherhood and sisterhood. The Greeks who perpetuate abusive practices of the pledges — either directly or by remaining silent when they occur — need to redefine their values if excellence is to be attained and maintained.

NSU game: a 'good show' for Vikings

By Ernie T. Griffin

During the basketball game Saturday night there were about 5,000 fans in the Vaughan Center. We were hosting the Norfolk State, a team we had not beaten at home in the past six years. While we were warming up the gym was also warming up. If you were a Viking basketball fan you should have known that it was going to be a good show. After both teams finished warming up, and the singing of the National Anthem was complete, it

was now time for the starting line ups to be announced. After the call of the starting line ups, both teams took the floor. We scored the first basket of the game and the crowd went wild. So ten minutes ticked off the clock in the first half, and Norfolk State was up by three points. Coach C.J. Mackey called time out to give his first five a rest. After the timeout we came out with two good defensive plays to tie the game at 26 with 2:23 left in the half. Going in at halftime we were up by one as we led 32-31.

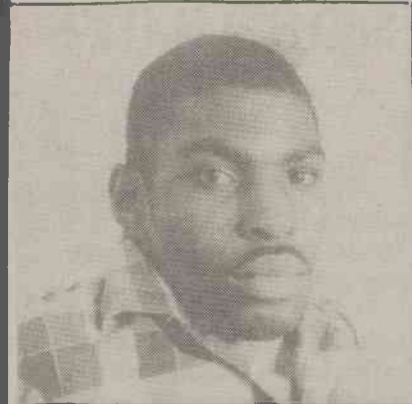
We started the second half

with two crucial mistakes, and Norfolk State took advantage of them both, hitting three three-pointers in their first four possessions. We were then down by eight points. Coach Mackey called a time out to settle us down and get us back in the flow. We were climbing back into the game slowly. At the five minute mark in the second half we had finally caught up with the Spartans, and we had taken a three point lead. From this point on to the 1:27 mark it was a see-saw game with each team matching basket for basket. Then Norfolk State called a timeout to regroup. The score was 67-68. The

ball was in play and Norfolk State had it with 28 seconds remaining. We committed a foul which sent them to the line for one-and-one. They made the first one but missed the second. We had the ball going up court when one of my teammates was fouled. He went to the line with a one-and-one situation. He hit both free throws with :04 left on the clock. Norfolk State, with one last chance to tie it up and send the game into overtime, attempted to inbound the ball, but one of my teammates intercepted it. We finally beat Norfolk State, 72-69.

VIEWPOINT

When do you think life actually begins?



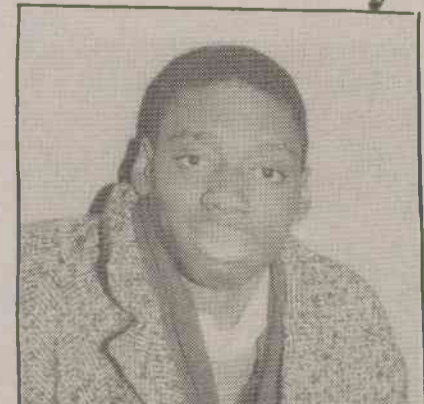
James J. Hargett
Williamston, N.C.

— at conception. The halting of the embryo's development would constitute murder.



Coy Harveson
Elizabeth City, N.C.

— at conception. I'm against abortions, in general, except in severe cases where the fetus will be born with suffering through out its life or in the case of rape.



Dennis Blount
New York, N.Y.

I'm against abortion because it is killing life that begins at conception — the point at which a person's traits and everything that makes a human being are present.



Stephanie Edwards
Smithfield, Va.

Abortion's okay. Some people are too young and it's necessary. Everyone should have a choice.

The Staff

- EditorRobin Sawyer
- Photography DirectorRichard McIntire
- PhotographersTanya Kenyon
Richard McIntire
Leamond Pearce
- Graphics ConsultantDiane Patterson
- Staff WritersPam Brown
Lavette Washington-Bias
Deborah Carr
Lynne Chapman
Shawn Everett
Dwayne Collins
Monique Thomas
Tracy Godbold
Lisa Gregory
Beverly Johnson
Jeanne Leigh
Travis Manuel
Becky Overton
Robin Pincus
Nancy Porter
Sylvia Purvis
Johnny Reid
Mike Whitehurst

The Compass

The Compass welcomes letters to the editor. Please send letters to Box 815, Elizabeth City State University, Elizabeth City, NC 27909. The Compass has been published by ECSU students since 1959 under the Department of Language, Literature and Communication. Dr. Anne Henderson, Chairperson. Faculty advisor: Stephen March.