

THE OPINION PAGE

Silent Victims

Now that the Senate hearings into Anita Hill's charges against Clarence Thomas are over, the nation is left with a raw nerve exposed: the issue of sexual harassment of women.

Many men say they don't understand this issue, but it is one which strikes home immediately to women. The sexual harassment of women is a universal problem that cuts across lines of class, race and religion.

Women in our culture are the constant targets of a great deal of sexual aggression—from catcalls and subtle innuendos to brutal crimes of rape and murder. Part of the problem lies in the way our culture uses women as a tool of merchandising products. Bombarded with media images of women who use sex appeal to sell products, many men begin to see women as products to be used instead of human beings deserving of dignity and respect.

Anita Hill showed a great deal of grace, dignity and composure in what must have been a difficult thing for her to do: go public with her story before a panel of largely unsympathetic men, and in front of millions of viewers. In speaking out on sexual harassment, she brought this issue to the forefront of the American consciousness.

It is an issue that needs urgently to be addressed.

When does the joke, the subtle hint, the off color remark, the crude look become harassment, become demeaning to women? Many men still say they do not know.

American men, including some ECSU students, instructors and even administrators, need to become more sensitive to women's feelings in this matter.

Many women bear comments and behavior that they find demeaning out of fear for jobs, grades, promotions, or their physical safety.

Women can help improve their lot by expressing their displeasure and even anger when they feel mistreated. Male abusers can misinterpret silence for acceptance of inappropriate behavior when, in fact, the woman is only being quiet out of fear.

Men can help by becoming more aware of women's feelings and treating the female half of the population with more respect.

Anita Hill deserves credit for bringing this issue to the front burner of the nation's attention.

Homecoming War

It is a relief to know that intelligent people at a university up for accreditation are able to put away their differences long enough to organize a party weekend. Months before Christmas, the Grinch almost stole Homecoming 1991!

The taxing aspect of the month-long controversy is that it took place within our triple entente of student leadership.

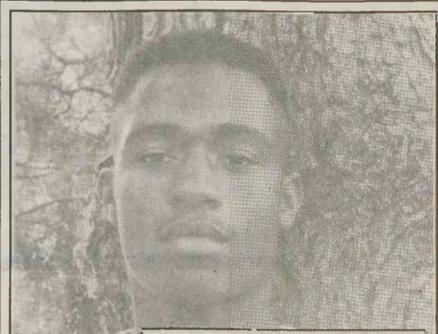
Is it really the belief of Student Affairs that a group of students who practice long hours, buy outfits and compete to entertain a crowd for the school is selfish to ask for compensation?

Is it really the belief of the Greek-lettered organizations that non-Greeks who currently pay money to attend this institution have more money to pay for a pass into the step show and dance than Greeks who have graduated and hopefully have jobs now?

Is it really the belief of the Student Government Association that the Greeks are not truly a large enough part of Homecoming Friday to not insult them by trying to replace them at the step show with dormitories and individual organizations that, well...can't step?

Is it the belief of all mentioned that this much deliberation over something everyone is a part of should be done without asking the student body how they feel?

Perhaps this "mess" that Homecoming 1991 had briefly turned into will motivate us to strive for the day when "The University Family" is more than a public relations slogan.



Shawn Singleton

"Yes, I don't believe the story they have come up with about Judge Thomas. I feel the Senate was looking for this type of thing when they reopened the case against him, but they should stop. He is the best person for the job, plus he is black."

Talk of ECSU:

In light of Anita Hill's charges against him, do you believe Clarence Thomas should have been confirmed to the Supreme Court?

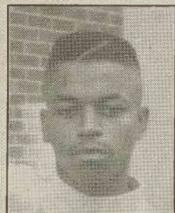


Joyce Fields

"No, I don't think he is very sympathetic to blacks or women."

Carlos Taliaferro

"Yes, I feel Judge Thomas should've been confirmed. The allegations against him seem to be falsehoods, and I'm sure they have been conjured up by some powerful organization that would prefer not to see a black man on the highest court in the land."



Katina Khan

"I don't think Judge Thomas is guilty of sexual harassment. If he was guilty, why did she follow him and why did she wait ten years to make the charges? Also, other women spoke out on his behalf. When someone is nominated for a high office, someone always tries to condemn them. I think Judge Thomas should have been confirmed because he is highly experienced and highly qualified for the position."



Guest Columnists

Thomas confirmation is a mistake

By Gary Brinn

The best and the worst in American politics was highlighted this weekend during the Thomas/Hill debacle before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Those who conducted themselves with decency this weekend deserve praise, but there are many more whose conduct was disgraceful.

Cheers- to Sen. Joe Biden for his fairness in conducting the hearings. As the atmosphere became increasingly charged with political maneuvering, Biden kept control. He was polite to the witnesses and to his colleagues on both sides of the aisle.

Cheers- to Clarence Thomas for refusing to participate in the Republican smear campaign against Anita Hill. Despite his anger over the charges against him, he conducted himself with dignity and honor in not attacking Professor Hill's character.

Cheers- to Anita Hill and the other witnesses for their courage in coming

when asked to by the Senate. Their willingness to testify speaks to the obligation each American has to participate as needed in our collective governing.

Jeers- to George Bush for patronizing African-Americans by nominating an unqualified candidate. Bush continues to arbitrarily place his supporters in high office without regard to their abilities.

Jeers- to Clarence Thomas for equating the hearings to a lynching. Approximately 2000 African-Americans were murdered by the White Camelias and other white supremacist groups around the turn of the century. Being dead, they did not have the opportunity to return to a lucrative job which was guaranteed them for life.

Jeers- to Clarence Thomas for crying racism. He has refused to support the black community in addressing the very real issue of racism in today's society. If Thomas wants to

look for racists, he should begin by looking at his own political bedfellows.

Jeers- to Arlen Specter for breaching the line that protected the private conduct of both Thomas and Hill from scrutiny. By introducing the Doggett Affidavit, he followed the age old technique of blaming the victim. This is no better than accusing a woman of asking to be raped.

Jeers- to Joe Biden and the other senators who equated the hearing to a judicial proceeding. Nothing could be less true. Thomas does not have a right to sit on the Supreme Court.

Jeers- to the American public for failing to understand the real issues. Few people followed the first round of hearings. If they had, they would know that Clarence Thomas is a man without integrity. He refused to stand by the positions he has espoused in the past, backing down on the key issues of natural law and the right to privacy. He evaded many of the questions posed

him by the Judiciary Committee on such issues as *Roe v. Wade*.

Most Americans don't realize their constitutional rights are slowly being eroded by the conservative court. They have allowed the White House to define the issue, focusing on whether Thomas harassed Hill or not. The issue should be the make-up of the Supreme Court, and its effect on our constitutional rights. A few years ago, the Court allowed states to regulate sex between consenting adults. Last year the court began eroding the freedom of religion in a case regarding Native Americans. Freedom of the press has been in jeopardy for many years. With Clarence Thomas shepherding our constitutional rights into the next century, we may have much to worry about.

(Gary Brinn, a Junior English and art major and a Democratic precinct chairman, was a county key during the Gantt campaign.)

Daddy is still 'always there' for me

By Alan Thomas

Some might say that in the summer of 1989 I lost a great deal. This so called "loss" opened my eyes and showed me that I had learned a great deal and that it was time for me to start putting that knowledge to use.

I left for Wisconsin in early June. The relationship was on the rocks and I knew that I was taking a chance. I packed the barest of necessities in a 1960 Ford Falcon and with \$130.00 and two credit cards in my wallet I set out for a dream called Ellen. Within three days of my arrival in Madison, Wisconsin, I knew that dream was not going to happen and I came home.

I came home in debt, most of my expenses were paid for with plastic. I was quite the wounded puppy, and sleep seemed the only escape. I used

to say it was the next best thing to being dead though I wished for the latter. I guess '89' was my summer of hibernation yet something happened to wake me from that sleep. My father died—or should I say left me indefinitely.

Daddy was fond of saying, "When you come to look at me that last time you'll remember." He used to say this when my brothers, or my sister and I did not want to do something that he wanted us to do. When Daddy left this world, I did remember. I remembered everything he taught me and he taught me quite a lot.

First, he taught me about loving, that if you loved someone you supported that person whether you agreed with him or not. I always knew that whatever I decided to do with my life my Dad would always be there for me.

He taught me that a hero need not be a warrior, a daredevil, or some other doer of "stupendous feats." Daddy was a quiet hero; all his life he worked and grubbed to care for those he loved. He was just your average working man. He loved to work. I'm glad he left this world in his sleep after a day's work rather than waste away in a hospital room.

I once asked my father why he didn't become a preacher—he taught Sunday School and he knew the Bible pretty well. He said simply, "I wasn't called to that."

He taught me that the best preaching comes from example. Some people who claim to be Christians seem to know nothing of the Golden Rule. My father would give the shirt off of his back to a friend and he considered everyone a friend. His life was like

that of a modern day Job; his patience and faith were always being tested. On Aug. 22, 1989 the Devil was paying off some bets.

Everything that had happened seemed to fit together after my father left. I'm glad things didn't work out in Wisconsin. I had two months more of wonderful talks, laughter and someone who I could always count on to be glad to see me. I don't regret going to Wisconsin because thinking that I'd be living that far away made me close to my father before I left.

My father's death caused me to look at his life and that gave me an example to try to live up to.

(Alan Thomas, a major in the Department of Language, Literature & Communication, is from Elizabeth City, N.C.)

Mr. Haley, you bored and dissatisfied us

By Ursula McMillion

Well, Mr. Haley most of the audience at the Fall Convocation was familiar with your book and resulting TV mini-series, but many students have expressed discontent regarding your address. You did bring out good points about genealogy, about the yearning for a "better day" for humankind. History has several other great voices which you could have drawn on as a source in your presentation other your personal work.

Many of us feel that you should have made reference to ECSU as the "root" of your higher education since this institution gave you your only accredited formal education. And, Mr. Haley, was your request for \$10,000 compensation due to your status as a world renowned author? Many families struggle to survive with that amount

of money as their gross annual income. Thank you for saving that HBCU slot for us as your busy schedule allowed but many faculty members, administrators and students feel disappointment with your performance.

To pay a man, especially a man of African descent \$10,000, to speak about genealogy and the future to a group of young people does not seem fair.

You made a numerous references to your novel *Roots* for which you have not only received a Pulitzer prize but also much material rewards. You have also been sued for plagiarism twice, and now two other authors are sharing your royalties for *Roots*.

And why no mention of your biographical work on Malcolm X? Among Africans or African Americans or Black Americans—whichever

we chose to call ourselves—there is a high degree of interest in his life and his Pan Africanist philosophy. Why did you ignore this great mind and his ideals in your speech to us?

You spoke of your most emotional experience while filming your mini-series and the symbolism of Louis Gossett's passionate declaration of there being a better day for the human race.

We felt there were many other sources which could have enhanced your address. *Roots*, which has been read and thoroughly analyzed, is a good novel but not a historical documentary.

We were looking for you to wrap your performance up with ribbons for our Centennial Celebration and maybe a donation; with words more fervently related to people of African descent; we were looking for you to captivate

and motivate, and instead you bored and disappointed many of us.

We understand that you are a writer not someone with great oratorical skills or maybe your role as a writer is a question too considering your plagiarism suits. You professed history being your specific discipline—well you should have given us more to sink our teeth into other than our personal ancestry.

It is difficult to understand how a institution of this caliber with needs for dormitory services, faculty and staff and general operating funds, can afford to pay "a name" \$10,000 to deliver such a bland speech.

(Ursula McMillion, a senior English/News Media major in the Department of Language, Literature & Communication, is from Calabasas, N.C.)

THE COMPASS

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